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THE **NI** NEW INTERNATIONALIST



THE NEEDLE & THE DAMAGE DONE

The crazy war on drugs

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THE PEOPLE. THE IDEAS. THE ACTION IN THE FIGHT FOR WORLD DEVELOPMENT.

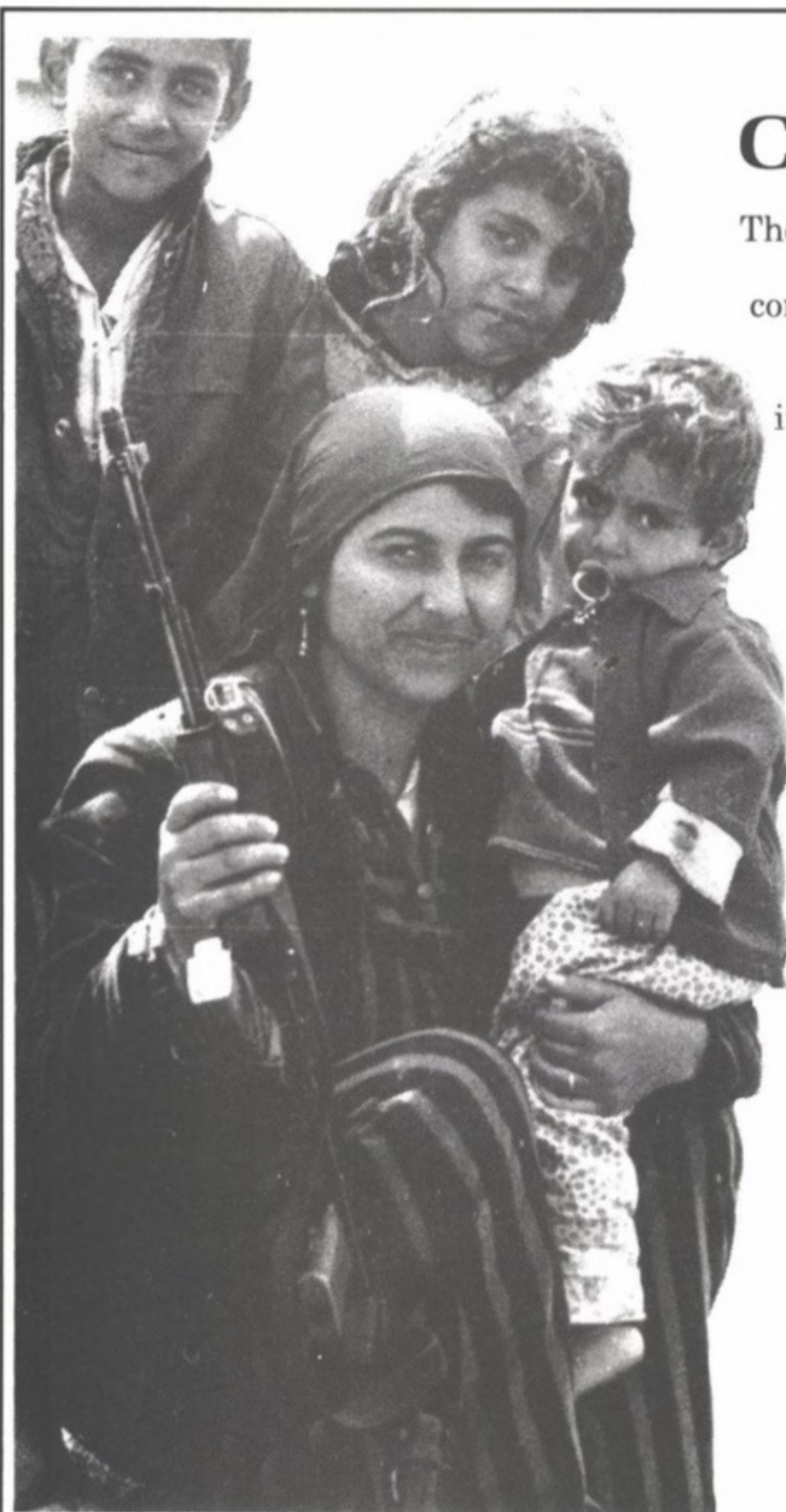


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KURDISTAN CULTURE WEEK

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no creeds and
no priesthood,
but we do believe
that there is
that of God
in everyone.**



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THIS MONTH'S THEME

The war on drugs

FROM THIS MONTH'S EDITOR

MOST of us fear that drugs might ruin the lives of people we care for – usually young people and almost always excluding ourselves. So when it came to discussing what we should say about the war on drugs the **NI** editorial debate was sharper and more passionate than usual. Here was a topic that touched us all. Everyone has a view.

Reacting to the pointless cruelty of the war, my first thought was that all drugs, including hard drugs like heroin and cocaine, should be legalized. It seemed to me that more damage was being done to the health of individuals and of society as a whole by prohibition than by illicit drugs themselves. This was, as you can imagine, a contentious view. The argument was not resolved, and I started work on the magazine feeling I was entering a labyrinth without an exit worth taking. But, as often happens, my views began to shift as I went along.

My own fears about drugs are focussed on my daughter, Ximena. She has grown up in the East End, the nearest thing London has to an inner-city ghetto. People who are looking for problems like drugs usually go to the East End to find them. So, true to form, I went back there to talk to Ximena and her friends. We met up in a North London pub.

They were good company – a bright, lively and lighthearted bunch of teenagers, most of whom had at least experimented with marijuana. But I found much less support for the legalization of drugs than I had anticipated. They were sceptical about the big business interests that would move into a legalized drug market. And, quite frankly, they couldn't get excited about abolishing laws they thought were unenforceable anyway.

I found all this rather disconcerting. I did not expect the people for whom I felt deep concern, including my own daughter, to start teaching me lessons. But they did. I became less interested in legalization, in whether cocaine chewing gum or opium-dispensing machines are a good idea, more interested in the issues both drugs and the war against them conspire to conceal. Both have about

them the feeling of a misleading metaphor, particularly for the relationship between rich and poor. The magazine began to take shape.

Now I'm wondering what Ximena and her friends will make of the finished article. I would like them to think it offers a way out of the drugs labyrinth, into a less perverse, less hypocritical and (admittedly) less glamorous world where we can see things more clearly for what they are, undistracted by the scream of police sirens. As for myself, politicians say that sometimes you can make your present convictions more compelling by confessing to the error of your former ways. Not being a politician I can't judge whether it's worked in this case.

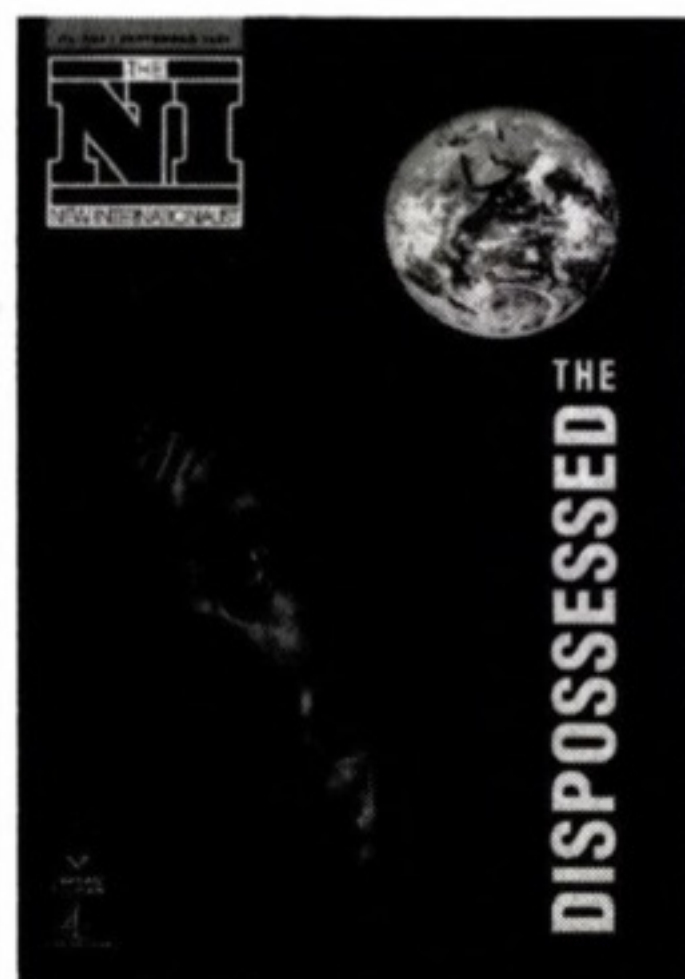
What I suspect Ximena will *actually* be thinking, however, is that I should stop worrying about her and give up my pipe. That is quite a different matter. After all, I began by claiming that when it comes to drugs we apply our concern to everyone but ourselves.

David Ransom.

*David Ransom
for the New Internationalist Co-operative*

Refugee outrage

We in United Nations Association warmly welcome the close link which has been forged between the International Broadcasting Trust – of which we are a member – and



the NI over the issue of refugees and asylum-seekers (*The dispossessed* NI 223).

May I plead that we all campaign vigorously to secure a real commitment by our governments to support just, humane and progressive policies towards refugees, displaced people and asylum-seekers. The 1992 Single European Act looks certain to move official policies against the interests of such people. And if this is allowed to happen, not only will a reversal be harder, but governments will be even less likely to adequately support the United Nations's High Commission for Refugees, which offers refugees such unique protection. These, surely, are attitudes which no NI reader can sit down and take passively?

Malcolm Harper, Director
United Nations Association of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland, London, UK

Neglected dead

The chronology of disasters (*Assailed by the Cyclone* NI 222) omitted the 200,000 East Timorese people murdered by the Indonesian army between 1975 and 1979. The reason for the omission must be that the US government publication used withheld the facts. The US and Indonesian governments are staunch allies.

Adrian Parr
Edgbaston, UK



The **New Internationalist** welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Include a home telephone number if possible and send your letters to the nearest editorial office. The address is inside the front cover.

Whispered truths

Your article on famine in Africa (*Assailed by the Cyclone* NI 222) contains an error typical of your reporting on Malawi. We have not suffered 'internal chaos from civil war' since the slave raids of the 19th century. Neither the pre-independence disturbances in 1958 nor the cabinet crisis in 1965 would fit that description.

In the same article your idea that a controlled press fosters famine gives the press far more influence than it has. Real news travels very efficiently by word of mouth. And the controlled press is not so much a result of the desire to limit knowledge or to squash dissent as it is of a deep-seated cultural reluctance

to discuss unpleasant truths publicly, especially when outsiders are present.

Stewart Lane
Limbe, Malawi

Cover concern

The helpfulness of the recent issue (*Assailed by the cyclone* NI 222) was marred by the unnecessarily grisly front cover depicting a litter of corpses. While tragedy and death is a sad fact of life which we ignore all too often, such scenes should be relegated to an inner page. I prefer my young children not to stare at dead bodies over breakfast and do not think my enthusiasm for NI is best served by needing to hide the magazine.

Tim Prouse
Berkhamstead, UK

Positive action

I must congratulate Anuradha Vittachi; she may not have found anything helpful to do about all these disasters, but by golly she's found a way of feeling ever so much more comfortable about it (*Assailed by the cyclone* NI 222).

I know it's unforgivably 'end-gaining' of me, but I have this strange desire to do something *practical* to help.

Stevie Krayner
London, UK

Curious apology

Anuradha Vittachi's piece – *Our Boys, Our Toys (Bang, bang you're dead* NI 221) – ploddingly details all the clichés and banalities of US attitude towards and involvement in the Gulf war. It then meanders into a rambling sexist diatribe that reads more like a dykes' charter than an original and rational

Prize winner

NI readers responded with several creative solutions to the question of who murdered the illustrious tax consultant Professor Stanislaus Rakowski in the June issue *Taxed to Death: the Great Revenue Robbery* (NI 220). Thanks to all who joined in the hunt. The grand winner of a two-year sub to NI is Jan Tagart of the Cook Islands. Here is Jan's solution:

IMMEDIATELY I saw it: the murderer was a left-wing activist, concerned that Radowski's proposals would improve the social environment sufficiently to postpone the Revolution yet again.

Roger Bowles was the man. He had the oppressed background. He consorted with French anarchists and probably heard the rumbling of tumbrels in his sleep – if he slept.

And yet... It was too obvious somehow, and not his style. French anarchists – or Liverpoolian Communists for that matter – don't push people off balconies. Bombs, yes. Balconies no. Compulsory high-jump merchants belong to the Mafia, or the CIA – cold, hard men with ruthless, gimlet eyes.

I searched through the mugshots again, looking for gimlet eyes, and lighted on two pairs: Per Johanssen and Chester Stone. Either of these would make a more ideologically-satisfying criminal. 'We don't like lobbyists,' period. 'And we despise lily-livered, middle-aged, work-within-the-system civil servants.'

Chester I eliminated after a moment's thought. How could somebody who LOOKS like a member of the CIA actually be in it? Wouldn't they have insisted that he changed his haircut? That left Per, and the motive

seemed thin.

Murder because of misunderstandings I don't like. It lacks dramatic integrity. And yet... I looked again. Those eyes. It HAD to be the Swede. I searched his resumé for a clue, and then it hit me, like a pancake, smack in the face. His name, of course. Per Johanssen. Why had I had trouble getting it right? Swedes pronounce 'J' like 'Y': Per Yorhansen: per your hands then: by YOUR hands then. I was the murderer! The trail had led to me, the Gumshoe himself. Who would gain most by solving this murder? Me, of course. I could write a book about it and solve my tax problems forever.

I flipped to the front of the mag and looked at the Editor's portrait. Gimlet eyes peered back at me. Here was the culprit, right in front of my nose. Right up my nose, in fact.

I sat back and lit a Camel, tossing my flip-top Ronson over my shoulder like a match. Now I could relax. I had solved the crime and the criminal certainly wasn't going to get away.

And yet... my brow furrowed in uncharacteristic puzzlement. Something was not quite right... I crossed my legs and took a deep drag, thinking hard...

Jan Tagart
Rarotonga, Cook Islands



Roger Bowles



Per Johanssen



Chester Stone



The Editor

debate on the arms trade. Sorry I'm white and male; pardon me for breathing.

LR Allen
Nether Headon, UK

Male liberation

In your edition *Bang bang you're dead* (NI 221) the articles by Anuradha Vittachi and Cynthia Enloe together with Joan Cavanagh's poem highlighted the role of men in armed oppression. Whether viewed historically or contemporarily there is absolutely no point in trying to contradict this linkage.

The time is long overdue for us as men to examine and redefine the gender roles and stereotypes by which society has socialized and oppressed us, and which we have unfortunately almost completely internalised. 'Masculine' and 'male' does not have to mean 'macho', which carries an image and expectations that, I believe, oppress men even as they oppress others.

If there are other men who, irrespective of sexuality, also feel the need to explore masculinity and what it means to be male with the objective of bringing about change in the oppressive status quo, I would like to hear from them.

Tony Land
Geneva, Switzerland

Letters to Tony Land can be sent c/o New Internationalist, Oxford. They will be forwarded.

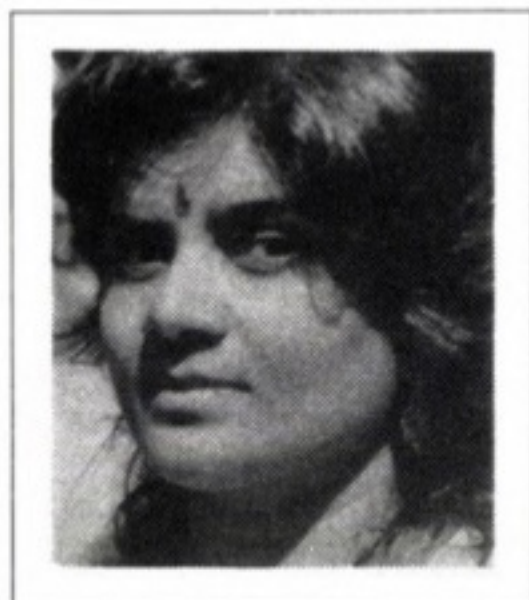
T-shirt style

I am both charmed and appalled by your editorial style. On the continent of Europe left-wing publishing has always caused endless theoretical and sectarian dispute, which makes your matter-of-fact and what-you-can-do approach refreshing to me. However your issues, though generally well-informed, usually conclude with a half-a-dozen simplistic recipes for change – if not childish vulgarities. When I finish reading them and see the T-shirt adverts on the back cover, I cannot help wondering if you are really serious thinkers and activists or just a bunch of well-intentioned Band Aid supporters.

João Paulo Monterio
Porto, Portugal

The views expressed on the letters page are not necessarily those of the NI.

L E T T E R F R O M I N D I A



The time trap

Mari Marcel Thekaekara wonders what we could learn from the deadline-free existence of the tribal people she works with.

A DELIGHTFUL old Simon and Garfunkel lyric popped into my head recently: 'Time it was and what a time it was, it was a time of innocence...' It came back to me when Roopa, a young doctor working on the project that my husband and I run for tribal peoples, remarked: 'Whenever I go to the villages I realize we are working with two time frames. Ours, where we are always in a tearing hurry, and the tribal time zone where everyone has all the time in the world.'

It always requires a mental switch to adapt to the tribal concept of time. Without it you get irritated, completely fed up. With it your whole perspective alters. You realize how enjoyable life can be when you give yourself time to stand and stare. Of course this is not conducive to meeting deadlines or hectic work schedules. But it is good for building relationships with people. It is also useful for picking up pointers about the tribals' lifestyle – which for outsiders is not always understandable.

For two years we lived on a farm run by tribal people. The farm manager used to go berserk because people simply did not turn up at eight o'clock in the morning when they were supposed to clock in. Later we realized that their unpunctuality was due to a simple fact which did not occur to the manager – or to us. None of them owned a watch. They were gauging time by the sun. So during the monsoon and in winter when the nights were longer, people assumed that it was not yet eight o'clock because it looked earlier.

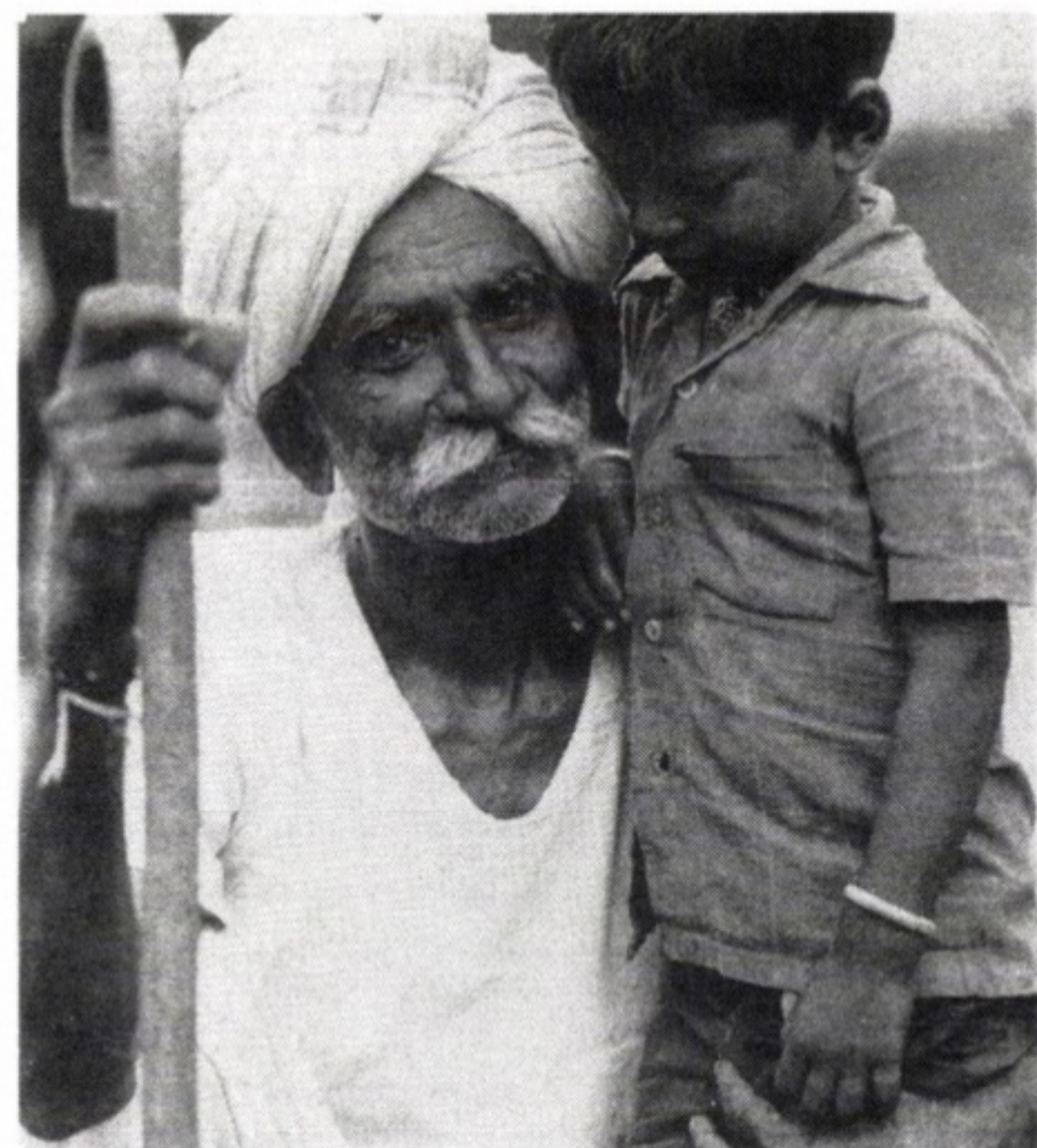
Likewise, people rarely work the mandatory six-day week demanded by tea estates, despite the wages being the highest in the area. We were bewildered by this at first, until an anthropologist pointed out that the tribals were adhering to the food-gathering patterns of their ancestors. The pattern? To forage for food from the forest and when they had found enough, to relax until the next hunter-gathering trip was necessary.

Non-tribal neighbours condemn this attitude towards life and consider the tribals to be lazy. Yet if more sophisticated urbanites suggest that a short-day week is necessary to relieve stress, they are not dismissed as shiftless or feckless. Neither are the people who clock into work on the dot – and then waste government time and money with innumerable extended coffee-lunch-tea breaks, gossip sessions or radio cricket commentaries.

I don't want to romanticize the tribals' lifestyle. Yet it did work well before the outside world caught up with them. The forest provided most of their limited needs. The unhurried pace

of life was gentle.

Today there are still a few unspoilt tribal villages in the heart of vast tracts of forest land. Entering them is always an enchanting experience. There is a quality of timelessness and tranquillity which it is impossible to convey. Quickly you feel the strains and stresses of your normal work day falling away. The air is cleaner, fresher. Unpolluted. And so is the atmosphere.



SUNIL GUPTA

But now, with the twenty-first century creeping up on them, cutting the earth beneath their feet, felling the giant trees that provided them with their protective, giving environment, any tribal who wants to survive has to compromise. There is no choice.

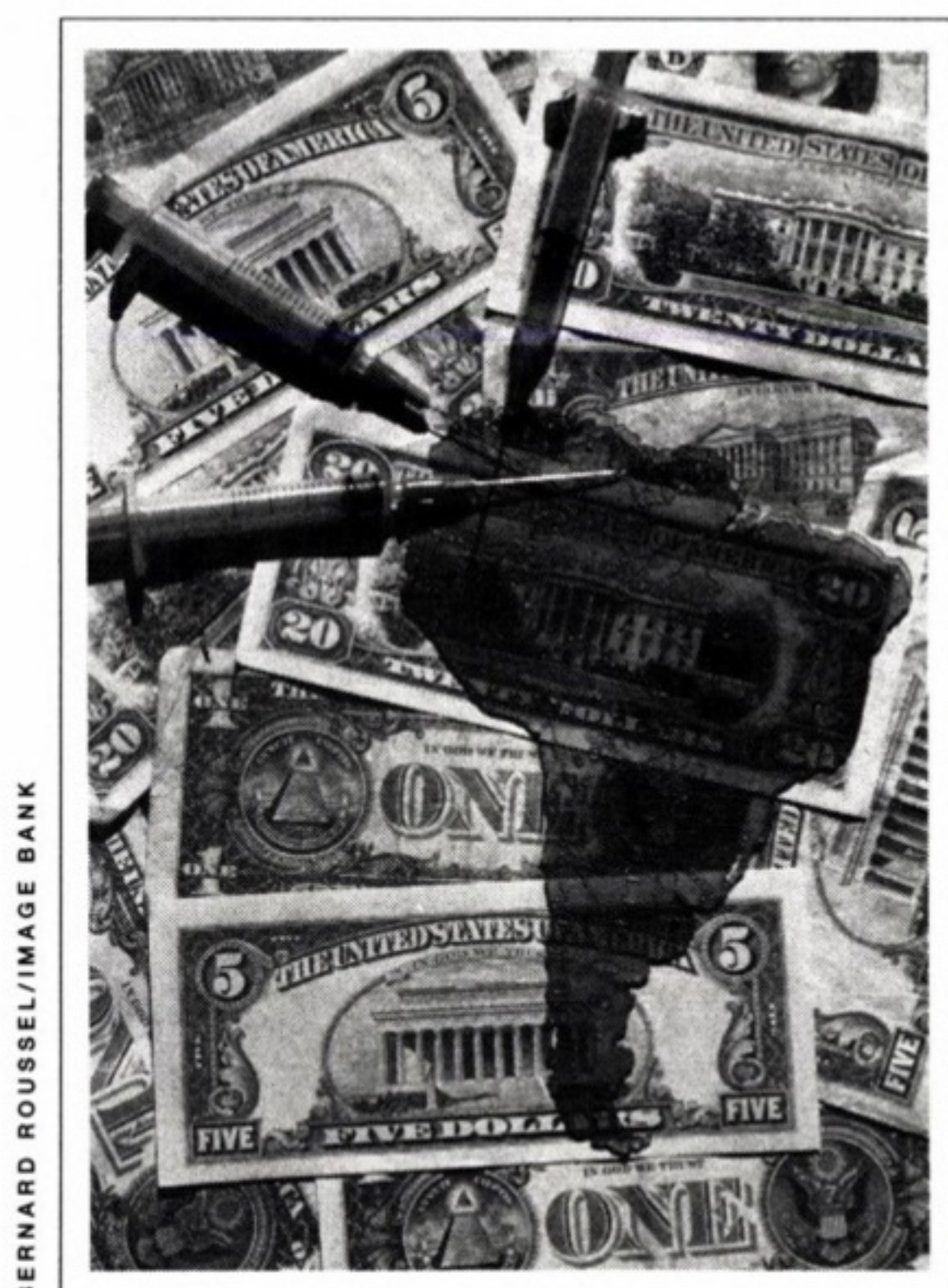
Probably the hippies had the same experience in the 1960s. The break with established systems was utopian – a necessary and wonderful experience which enabled them to stand back and observe a lifestyle they had rejected. But when you need the establishment and its systems to survive, in the end you are forced to work with it.

Try to change it. Try your hardest. And make sure you never give up.

But you can't live in a prehistoric time zone, no matter how wonderful the experience. The reality of ordinary living brings one down to earth with a resounding bang. I think the trick is to keep a perspective ... always. ■

Mari Marcel Thekaekara has been working for the last seven years on a project she and her husband started for native people in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

The needle & the damage done



BERNARD ROUSSEL/IMAGE BANK

Persecuting peasant drug growers in Latin America and addicts in Western inner cities is wrong in principle and a failure in practice.

David Ransom tells the story behind the international war on cocaine and heroin, at a time when the US finds its own cities besieged by drug-related violence.

‘WE’RE not really warriors in the war on drugs,’ Léon Wever readily admits. He is a senior official in the Dutch Ministry of Welfare, Health and Cultural Affairs. His office looks out over the pastoral calm of Rijswijk on the outskirts of The Hague. ‘After all,’ he continues, ‘it’s the first time people have ever waged war on, basically, a series of plants... No, the possession of small quantities of illicit

drugs for personal consumption really is not a matter for the police.’

Difficult to imagine a government official saying such a thing in London or Ottawa, Canberra or Wellington, let alone Washington. But what if Léon Wever is right? The war on drugs and the Dutch alternative have both now been going for 20 years – long enough to compare notes.

In the Netherlands prohibitionist drug laws remain. But the public prosecutor can

decide not to act on them if alternatives are considered ‘more appropriate’. That means help and treatment for people who get into trouble with drugs, rather than prosecution and imprisonment for those who offend against the law. It’s called ‘the expediency principle’. Perhaps only the Dutch can make a principle out of expediency. ‘But it works,’ says Léon Wever. And that is the first time anyone has felt able to make such a claim for any drugs strategy since I began

researching this subject.

There is no shortage of evidence to back the claim. Drug-related violence in the Netherlands is minimal. An already low rate of drug-related deaths is actually falling – one of the few places in the world where this is true.¹ Drug addiction rates, though hard to measure, are thought to be slightly lower than in the UK or France, and very much lower than in the US.²

Shopping for cannabis

'Coffee Shops' sell cannabis – though not heroin or cocaine – quite openly all over Amsterdam. But consumption of cannabis has not increased and its toleration has not encouraged customers to use more powerful drugs like heroin and cocaine.³ 'Well, what more could you ask?' adds Léon Wever pointedly. 'The cannabis market is under control.' The result is that the drugs issue is no longer exploited for political advantage in the Netherlands.

I want to get some idea of what is happening on Dutch city streets. So I arrive early at an Amsterdam drug clinic for an appointment with Dr Kris Kanhai, who runs it. I am part of a general movement of people with limps or an uncertain sense of direction towards a closed door. These are the people, the drug addicts, who in most other cities around the world would be tagged 'the enemy'. It's a dispiriting sight. We stand dripping in the rain, in some cases urgently waiting for the methadone that is used as a safer substitute for heroin. A smart young man in a crew cut and blazer opens the door.

'I have an appointment with Dr Kanhai!' I cry as I'm bundled past him by the crowd.

Peddling cannabis in Amsterdam.



CARLOS REYES/ANDES PRESS AGENCY

A shark-toothed sham in Peru. This anti-drugs chopper sprays harmful defoliants on crops.

'Of course. Just wait with the others,' says the blazer man knowingly.

'In New York there are a lot of black people dying with AIDS,' says Dr Kanhai when I eventually get to see him. 'I've often wanted to go and tell the authorities there: "If you don't give these people [who inject drugs] clean needles all of them will die". In Amsterdam we operate a needle-exchange programme and that has helped to keep down the level of HIV infection. American policy is that if you give them needles you accept drug use. We never accept drug use in Amsterdam... But we have taken the excitement and most of the danger out of it. Ten years ago if you used drugs you were a clever kid – sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, you know the sort of thing. Not any more. We try to bring people out of hiding. If they have some perspective on life, some future, some medical support, that is the best B52 bomber in any war on drugs that you can possibly imagine.'

Dr Kanhai is a Hindu from Surinam. He studies the *Mahabharata*, a story in which two related families fight each other. 'The first principle of war,' says Dr Kanhai, 'is "Know your enemy". It's impossible to fight a proper war against drugs, against nobody quite knows what.'

Amsterdam is a delightful, prosperous, eccentric and cultured modern city preoccupied with making money. You really cannot say that it has a worse drug problem than places where the war on drugs has been fought with greater relish. For the most part it's less violent, more relaxed and generally more sane. I leave

Holland convinced that one fundamental premise of the war – that this kind of option encourages drug use and leads to chaos – is nonsense.

So too is another: that you can deal with the problems of drug abuse in the rich world by knocking hell out of drug producers in the Third World. Powerless, impoverished peasant farmers in countries wracked by debt and collapsed commodity prices are producing illicit drugs because they have little choice. The war tries to eradicate their crops and introduce a new choice for peasant families: between hunger and persecution. There is cruelty in forcing people to choose persecution, as choose it they surely must.

Strutting dictators

There is racism too, in a war that routinely makes all Colombians suspect drug smugglers or all Jamaicans potential Crack dealers. The war has resurrected crude stereotypes of Third World cultures, traditions and peoples to promote an updated version of the 'Banana Republic'. 'Drug Republics' are peopled entirely by strutting dictators, flamboyant millionaires and conniving peasants, all conspiring to hook the finest bloom of Western civilization onto their nasty narcotics. Never mind that these dictators have usually been put there to look after the rich world's interests – if need be, they can be turned into the perfect enemy too.

The fact is that the whole sorry story of drugs begins and ends in the rich world. Heroin and cocaine were both devised for medical use within the past 100 years by

JULIO ETCHART



Coca producers are perched on a slippery slope between hunger and persecution.

chemical companies in the West. Both were, until quite recently, used for 'recreational' purposes exclusively in the urban industrial societies of the West. The US itself is now the largest producer of marijuana in the world.⁴ Amphetamines ('speed'), which are knocked together from chemicals made in the industrialized world, are by far the most widely used illicit drugs after marijuana.⁵

How is it then, that images of coca plants being torn up in Bolivia and cocaine factories being put to the torch in Colombia have become such an integral part of the war on drugs? It's because they look good on prime-time TV in the US to people who were promised a 'drug-free society' in exchange for their votes. Such an electoral promise is politically potent because it provides an escapist explanation for the political crisis in the US, the devastated inner cities and the spiralling crime and violence on the streets.

The full extent of the dereliction,

violence and despair that have overtaken the inner cities of New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, Washington or Los Angeles in recent years is not fully appreciated outside the US, or even by many Americans themselves. There are no jobs, no decent homes, no health care and not much education worth the name. Infant mortality rates in the Black ghettos approach Third World levels. In Harlem, New York City, 47 per cent of residents were living below the poverty line in the 1980s. When a few unionized, well-paid job vacancies in the Los Angeles docks became available, 50,000 predominantly Black and Chicano youth lined up for miles to apply for them.⁶

Promoting the mobsters

The Reagan era closed public services (including drug treatment programmes) on principle and left 30 million Americans living in poverty. These are the conditions in which crime and violence flourish, particularly if they occur in the heart of the most prosperous place on earth. Drug prohibition promotes the criminal mobsters by handing them control of the illicit trade, and creates the illusion that the war on drugs is really a war on crime.

The people who live in these places have now been tagged the enemy within. Gung-ho pronouncements by politicians and police-chiefs are quickly followed by aggressive police 'swoops', mass arrests and, to back them up, an assault on civil liberties and the US Constitution designed to give the police greater powers. 'Drugs' have been interpreted as the cause rather than the consequence of dereliction, the nearest thing to sin that a secular society can devise. 'Drugs' is set fair to replace 'Reds' in the demonology of post-Cold War America.

Well, has it worked? Is the US today any closer to being a 'drug-free society'? Has an anti-drugs enforcement budget that now exceeds \$20 billion a year paid off? No. There are at least four million drug addicts in the US – more than the total number in the rest of the industrialized world put together. Consumption has not fallen significantly since the war was declared, nor has demand declined. Illicit drugs are no harder to find than they were – and worldwide production is actually increasing.⁴

It would be easier to view all this with equanimity from a distance but for the enormous influence the US exercises worldwide. Signing up for the war has become an essential qualification for international friendship with America.

Yet over and over again the huge US intelligence network overseas has been involved with arms dealing and drug running to produce a foul-smelling mixture

of political, social and economic intrigue thought to favour US foreign interests. Without it the drug-trafficking business could not possibly have developed so fast.

The largest opium-producing area of today, the 'Golden Triangle' on the borders of Myanmar/Burma, Laos and Thailand, is run by drug barons whose careers began when the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) stimulated their activities during the Vietnam War.

In Australia, Frank Nugan, a Sydney merchant banker, shot himself in 1980. On his body police found a calling card from one William Colby, who had just retired as Director of the CIA. Six months later the Nugan Hand Bank, of which Frank Nugan was the boss, collapsed. From the ensuing scandal it emerged that the bank had close links with the CIA, employed an inordinately large number of retired CIA agents and had been heavily involved in drug-trafficking.⁷

Central America became the transit point for cocaine when the US was waging a covert war against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. US Senator John Kerry's subcommittee on narcotics and terrorism uncovered so many links between the US-backed Contra forces and drug running that it is questionable which was more important to the Contras, defeating the Sandinistas or dealing in drugs. And that didn't include the Iran-Contra scandal, when Colonel Oliver North and Admiral John Poindexter, thinking they were doing President Reagan's bidding, indulged in freelance drug dealing to get round a Congressional ban on funding for the Contras.⁸

The most recent evidence of the CIA's involvement in drugs is emerging from the

Drugs are the consequence, not the cause, of dereliction in American cities.



CAMERA PRESS

collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI). Manuel Noriega, the former President of Panama, who is standing trial in Miami for drug trafficking, was instructed when he was employed by the CIA to open BCCI accounts through which money for the Contras in Nicaragua would pass. The Colombian drug cartels used the same BCCI offices in Panama to launder drug money. The CIA itself maintained BCCI accounts.

The London *Economist* reports that in Afghanistan 'all parties knew some of the rebel groups were running their own drug-smuggling operations. It is likely that on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan BCCI was used both to finance the rebels and to launder drug money. The CIA seems to have known all about this... Some of the world's most respectable governments have allowed their intelligence agencies to work with BCCI in the belief that doing so could serve those governments' interests.'⁹

So, incredible as it may seem, in drug-producing areas around the world there are powerful friends of the US who owe their position to trafficking in drugs. When it comes to apportioning responsibility for the ensuing chaos the US's own CIA has a lot to answer for.

Muddy waters

Implausible and unpalatable facts like this muddy the water. Critics can easily get lost, too. If you oppose the use of drugs you find yourself swimming with the redneck drug warriors. If you oppose the war on drugs you might have joined the school of Milton Friedman. He's the economist closely linked with monetarism, who advised the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, provided the theoretical underpinning to the Reagan era itself and has now called for the legalization of drugs. With others on the libertarian right he believes in the free market as an article of faith. Drugs, they say, are a commodity like any other. Prohibition interferes with the sacred operations of the market. Decent entrepreneurs, not Third World cartels or Black gangs in Los Angeles, have the right to make an honest buck out of them.

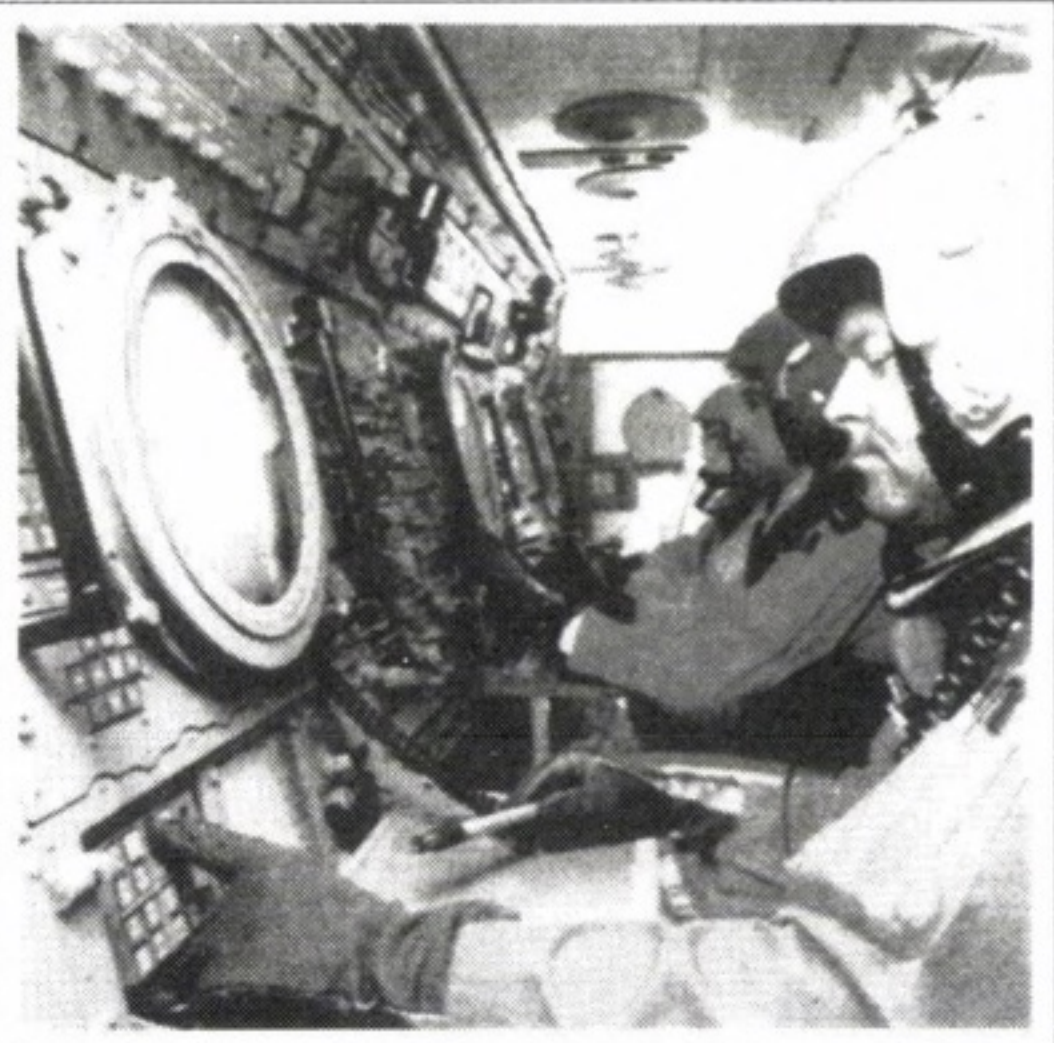
Liberal US academics and civil libertarians also support the legalization call.¹⁰ But their case suffers from a possibly fatal flaw. Legalizing hard drugs and handing them over to a free market does nothing whatever to address the awful conditions in American inner cities and the Third World that gave birth to the war on drugs in the first place. Indeed, it replicates the same principles that helped to create them. A free market in drugs might remove one mask from the monster, but not the monster itself. There's no quick fix on

Pushing the Pentagon

So you thought the war on drugs was some speech-writer's metaphor?
There's a new drug strategy coming soon to neighborhoods
in the US: 'Send in the Marines!'

THE Pentagon now occupies a central role in domestic US drug-control policy. In the name of fighting narcotics, heavily-armed troops are doing battle in cities and countrysides. Under the 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act, the Department of Defense is now responsible for gathering and sharing intelligence about drug trafficking on US soil. The Department reports directly to the US President and, unlike the FBI and the CIA, its domestic activity is not subject to oversight by Congress.

- In Washington DC National Guard helicopter pilots chased drug suspects with floodlights and deploy police commanders to Crack-house busts
- On the Arizona-Mexico border US Marines engaged in a gunfight with unidentified horsemen suspected of drug smuggling
- In Northern California, while army pilots reportedly fresh from the Panama invasion flew gunships overhead, an infantry division in search of marijuana growers cordoned off two



square kilometres of elk preserve and arrested everyone who trespassed

- In Kentucky bluegrass country the National Guard searched people's backyards and buzzed them with helicopters
- A program called 'Guard Against Drugs' ordered weapon-toting Arizona National Guards to land their helicopters at schools and deliver anti-drug talks
- Last year Congress authorized \$450 million to expand the Department of Defense's drug war, a 33-per-cent increase over 1989. This did not include the cost of the National Guard's new anti-drug law-enforcement activities
- The Pentagon spent \$130 million last year on aerostats, tethered balloons equipped with radar on the southern border with Mexico
- Former Virginia governor Gerald Báliles authorized National Guard units to perform under-cover surveillance on suspected drug dealers in rural areas. The Pentagon has approved spying by Guard troops in other states
- Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney has expressed interest in making military bases and ships available to house drug arrestees when jails and prisons are full
- Intelligence hardware items such as secure telephone transmission lines and new computers with broad database capabilities are being funded via the Pentagon budget. Any official can tie into this system and share otherwise classified material, including hearsay, political data and anything else any informant has to say about you. It all gets sifted through the El Paso Intelligence Center, a major US drug-data network. One of the Center's many sources is Operation Alliance, another center established in 1986 by the then anti-drug czar George Bush. Whom did George Bush put in charge of his Operation Alliance? The Pentagon's own Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Matthew Reiss/ *Mother Jones*

offer for the rethink about private greed and public squalor in the US that is so long overdue.

Drugs, whether they screw you up or not, make such a rethink that much more unlikely. And, when they have served their purpose, another mask to hide the monstrous deprivation will be found: perhaps the racism that lies behind the war will feel free to come up front.

What is missing is a constructive, humane and public response to the causes of the drugs havoc as well as to the havoc drugs cause. That means help rather than harassment, peaceful measures that work rather than warlike ones that don't.¹¹ The Dutch have given us a clue to what is possible, and we should be grateful to them for that.

In the meantime the war on drugs goes on. It has to be condemned for what it is –

cruel and perverse. Cruel because it persecutes powerless people in the Third World who grow the drugs and vulnerable people in the rich world who use them; perverse because it creates and feeds its own enemies. That war has now become a political convenience. The rich world has, you might say, become hooked on it. ■

¹ Information supplied by Peter Cohen, University of Amsterdam. ² Léon Wever, *Drug Policy Changes in Europe and the US*, Dutch Ministry of Welfare, 1991. ³ *The Drug Abuse Situation in the Netherlands 1991*, Dutch Ministry of Welfare, and Ministry of Justice. ⁴ Mary H Cooper, *The Business of Drugs*, Congressional Quarterly Inc., Washington, 1990. ⁵ *Drug Misuse in Britain 1990*, Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence, London. ⁶ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, Verso 1990. ⁷ Alfred W McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin*, Lawrence Hill Books, 1991. ⁸ Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall, *Cocaine Politics*, University of California Press, 1991. ⁹ *The Economist*, London, 3 August 1991. ¹⁰ James A Inciardi, *The Drug Legalization Debate*, Sage, 1991. ¹¹ See for example Bruce K Alexander, *Peaceful Measures: Canada's Way Out of the 'War on Drugs'*, University of Toronto Press, 1990.



I want it now

Trevor Turner hits the endorphin button to find the addiction that lies behind the pleasure principle.

A leading footballer once described his habit of spending hours kicking a football against a lamppost as being 'like a drug'. He could have said it was like driving too fast or eating chocolate – behaviours much more commonly addictive than the complicated business of shooting adulterated opiates into a battered vein – but that would not have served his purpose.

Perhaps we should ask a more pointed question: what deters more people from getting into drug addiction? After all, the principle is pleasure and few on this planet are beyond its appeal.

Theories as to why people take drugs usually begin with biological and pharmacological analyses. Convinced

'mechanists' in fact regard such theories as entirely sufficient. Forget the social and psychological wrapping, they say, let's talk about endorphins, encephalins and the 'hard data'. The human brain has a complex system of pleasing itself. Morphine-like substances ('endorphins') are released by all sorts of stimuli. Endorphins kill pain, induce euphoria and stop your gut churning.

But most people given opiates, for pain relief after surgery for example, do not become addicted. Over 80 per cent of GIs returning from Vietnam had opiates detected in their urine but most did not go on to 'regular abuse'. In other words, it may well be that addiction to opiates is just a lack of natural endorphins – that 'addicts'

are merely self-medicating and that this replacement therapy is no different from giving hormone or vitamin supplements to those with established deficiency diseases.

By extension this theory suggests that hobbies or habits – climbing mountains, racing cars, running marathons, balloonatics – are endorphin stimulating. And as with the tale of Shangri-La, once you have been to heaven (or ecstasy, oneness with the world, utter peace or what you will) you spend your time trying to get back there. Little kicks or big kicks, once you hit the endorphin button you repeat and repeat.

This model is godless and includes the idea that religious conversion is a kind of 'endorphin storm' in a social context of intense stress and group fervour. It extends

to psychological theory. The sheer pleasure of drug taking – and addicts are as sensitive to the quality and purity of their drugs as connoisseurs of wine or whisky – acts as a reward in itself. If there is further reinforcement in terms of social acceptance or peer encouragement, then it becomes a learned habit of personal analgesia.

Alongside are the processes of craving and decision-making. If it is more painful to face the longer-term implications of dependence, then people are bound to prefer to satisfy their craving.

Such decisions are strongly reinforced by market economics. 'It's a hit', screams the advertisement for Coca-Cola. 'I can see clearly now, the rain has gone', goes the song for a Nescafé commercial. 'Happiness is a small cigar', intones the Hamlet voice-over. The craving associated with thirst and hunger pangs is considered normal, and is well understood by the fast-food industry.

Yet some people regard addiction as a form of psychiatric illness, a disease that can be cured by treatment. For example there have been numerous attempts to define some sort of 'addictive personality disorder'. While addicts are often smarter and more neurotic than average, so are psychologists and actors and a lot of other people. Addicts are said to show more 'hostility' and 'intropunitiveness', which is to say they are more readily angry with the world and themselves. But these are hardly firm features of something psychologically distinct. After all, the most common cause of irritability in hospital patients is bladder distension, but being unable to pee is

hardly a diagnosis.

Addicts rarely have defined psychiatric disorders even when drug-free. More to the point, the speciality of drug dependency is poorly regarded in professional circles. Consultant posts are hard to fill with suitable appointees – an indication perhaps of the false medicalization of the problems of addiction.

Then there are the things we can all take a view on. These are the 'deep-money veins' (to quote Martin Amis) that stir the blood. We can say, for example, that addicts are more often male, adolescent or in their twenties, and derive from urban minority groups. Broken families and parental alcoholism are typical. Delinquency usually precedes drug use, which points to a common behavioural style rather than the floppy belief that addicts only steal because of their condition.

The cheaper the supplies of drugs are, the more people use them. Hong Kong, where opiates are cheap and plentiful, has an addiction rate of about 10 per cent; in the UK, where they are expensive and banned, it is less than a half of one per cent. By definition there are no alcoholics in Saudi Arabia and there used to be no drug addicts in Eastern Europe.

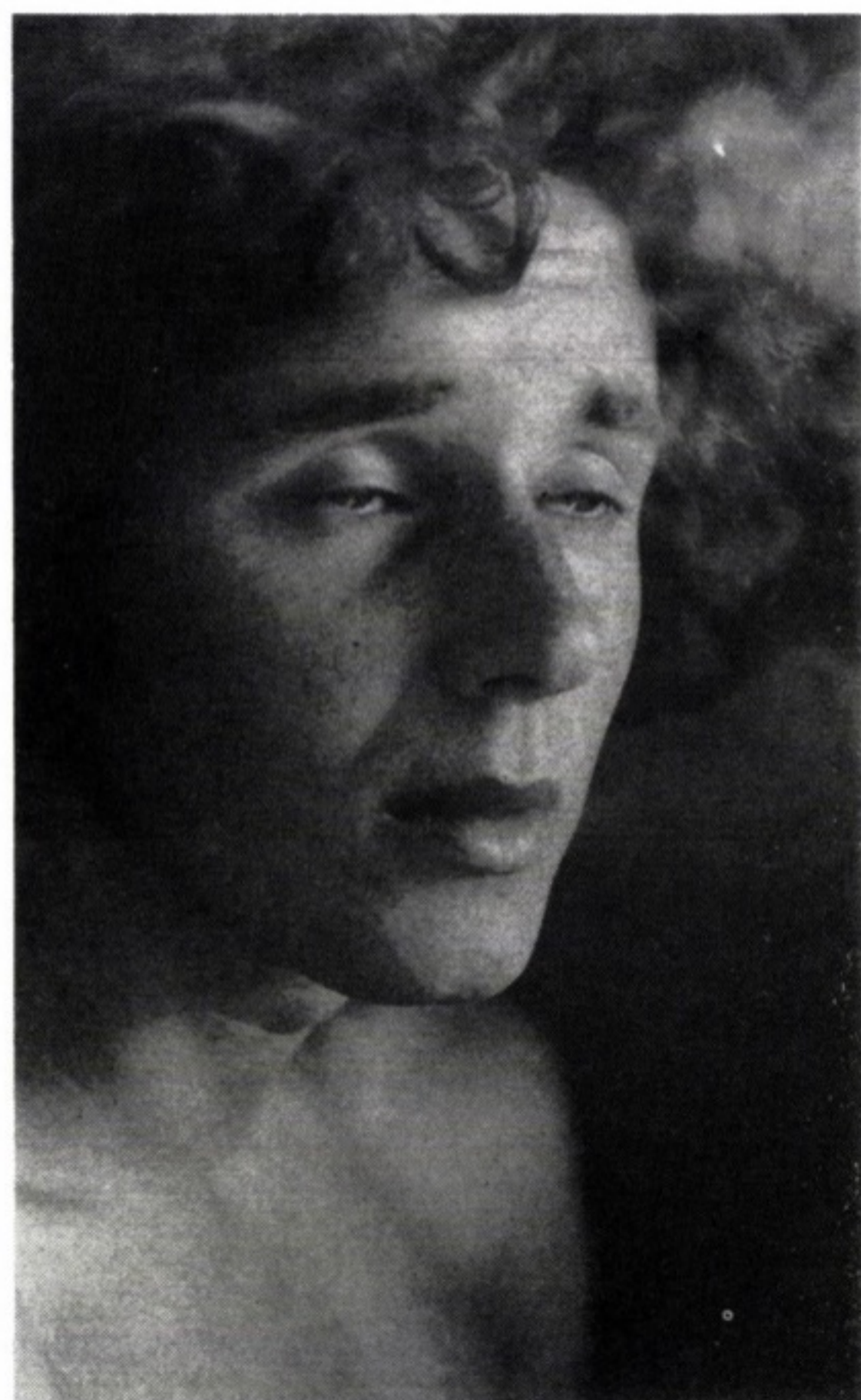
Out of this data base two main sociological theories emerge. Durkheim's *anomie* has popular appeal amongst the chattering classes, proposing that deviant behaviour is a retreat for those who have failed in society. Alongside that has come 'deviancy amplification', wherein society establishes an agreed nonconformist group who attract to themselves a 'deviant cohort'. Controls lead to increased awareness, and thus recruitment of further deviants.

This reflects one of the most telling statements I have heard from an addict, describing the effects of anti-heroin advertising. He said that he knew, at once, that he just wanted to be like them, to be an addict. He liked their appearance, their pallor, their thin, pinched faces, their lifestyle and their separate identity.

It is, of course, a thrilling life. Every day demands moments of action, a challenge somehow to obtain the drugs, with risks to be taken, a gauntlet to be run. It is hard work being an addict, and legal and medical controls enhance that atmosphere.

It is also a phenomenon of modern times. Many have railed against tobacco, alcohol, cocaine and opiates for hundreds of years. But you could buy opium sticks at the corner shop in Victorian England – it took the twentieth century to outlaw them.

So why do people take drugs? Or rather, why do so many dabble in instant happiness? Some blame the families.



PHOTOS : MARK EDWARDS / STILL PICTURES

Once you've been to Shangri-La
you spend your time trying to get back.

'Shoot the parents and move the kid 3,000 miles', said the oldest inmate of the US's drug penitentiary at Lexington. Others like myself regard drug-taking as a marker of social discontent. The higher the rate, the more dislocated the society. Here the 'problem' becomes the US inner city and, like serial killers, there is a peculiarly American style about most of the problems of drug abuse.

Create an 'I want it now', queue-barging society and what do you expect? If your world is unrewarding, while images all around you glow with cheerful normality, what are you supposed to think? Aspirin sales are enormous, officially for headaches. Chocolate and coffee deliver caffeine for extra alertness. Tobacco and alcohol calm and stimulate to equal degrees. Most of these can be obtained from machines or in special ever-open stores because they are needed urgently. Newspapers tell of sex addiction, one-armed bandit addiction and news addiction.

This is akin to suggesting that addiction is an essential engine of high capitalism, the dark side of a demand- and consumer-led economy. By contrast, a truly cultured world has no need of that kind of buzz. When it comes to sheer personal indulgence every addict says one thing about opium, about morphine, about heroin: 'There is nothing better to do'. ■

Dr Trevor Turner is a consultant psychiatrist who lives and works in the East End of London.

Streets of London: anything helps if there's
nothing better to be done.



Growing the stuff

Coca growers are front-line casualties of the war on drugs in Bolivia. Susanna Rance journeys through the battlefield to meet them.

Mama Coca: a sacred element of Indian life in Bolivia.

today have to bow to the new market forces created by the cocaine industry. 'I chew a couple of ounces a day,' reckons Dionisio Orellana, a farmer from the hillside community of Cochimita. 'When there's repression in the Chapare and the growers can't get their produce out to the big buyers, they sell it locally, so it's easy for us to get supplies – we can exchange 25 pounds of potatoes for a pound of coca. But when trade is going well for them, the leaf is more expensive for us.'

Deep in the Red Zone

In 1987 plantations were officially divided into three categories: 'traditional' areas, where growing was declared legal; areas with 'excess production' which had to be phased out; and new, 'illegal' zones exclusively catering for the drug trade, where crops were to be destroyed. Eterazema, where Doña Inés and her family have farmed for two decades, is now firmly within the Chapare 'Red Zone', the target for aggressive campaigns to push substitution of coca by other crops.

As well as fetching far higher prices than any other agricultural product, coca is the only Andean crop with an endless stream of eager buyers prepared to defy difficult conditions to pick up the three or four harvests each year directly from the growers. 'We also plant citrus fruits, bananas and yucca,' explains Néstor Bravo Arispe, leader of one of the five Chapare coca growers' unions. 'But with bad roads and no transport, it's hard to get those products out of here. And when we do, prices are so low it's not worth our while. Coca is easy to carry and it has a guaranteed market. The Government has tried to promote alternative crops, but they've always failed.'

A variety of substitution programmes have been attempted, some focussing on improving yields and markets for traditional exports such as coffee, while others explore new ventures into flowers, spices

CARLOS REYES/ANDES PRESS AGENCY



‘WE'RE not growing coca any more – we can't, it's not allowed,' Doña Inés told us firmly, hands on her wide hips, standing at the entrance to her roadside farm.

It seemed a sensible enough response to give to a couple of *gringos* nosing around armed with cameras and microphones. Behind her, spread on sackcloth, a huge carpet of fresh green leaves was hastily being swept up by a young man in shorts, a straw broom in each hand. The rush was on: all along the rutted mud track we could see coca growers packing their harvest into bundles to get it out of the zone before their planned road blockade – in protest against US-backed militarization of the anti-drug offensive.

Doña Inés came to the subtropical Chapare plains twenty years ago with her parents – farmers from Arani, a neighbouring province stricken by frequent droughts. They were among the first wave of

migrants to leave cramped valley plots to clear farms out of the dense bush, struggling with a new environment where determination and hardiness were the most essential tools.

Now the colonizers face new difficulties: as coca growers, they have found themselves in the vortex of the anti-drug war, waged from Washington with increasing violence. 'We're farmers, not traffickers,' protests Doña Inés. 'But they call this area a "red zone" and treat us like criminals.'

Mama coca, for centuries a basic element of Quechua and Aymara cultures, has been controversial since the Conquest. Seeing that chewing the leaf enabled their serfs to withstand the rigours of high altitude, cold, fatigue, hunger and thirst, the *conquistadores* set about expanding the ancestral small plots into plantations, providing daily rations which are still a basic demand of miners and other workers in the highlands.

Those who use coca as a daily staple

COCA BOLIVIA

IN: US assistance

Equipment, advisers, training and some \$36 million are provided by the US to support Bolivian army efforts to eradicate illicit coca production. An armed 'Mobile Rural Patrol' has been trained by the US to tackle coca producers and, occasionally, traffickers.

OUT: coca exports

Coca leaves and semi-processed coca paste are exported to Colombia for processing into cocaine. The minimum value of Bolivia's coca exports is estimated at over \$1 billion, of which just \$172 million reaches the producers. Bolivia and Peru between them produce almost all the world's coca.

The Red Zone

The 'Red Zone' is the part of the Chapare plains in central Bolivia where the coca leaf is now processed into cocaine paste. Formerly the paste was sold openly in rural markets. Now processing has been moved to other areas such as the Beni jungle lowlands around Trinidad.

Migration

In the mid-1980s the world price of tin collapsed and 30,000 Bolivian miners lost their jobs. Some moved to the coca-producing areas, where they were joined by landless farmers and migrants from the cities impoverished by Bolivia's economic crisis. The area of land devoted to coca production almost doubled.

Chapare ● Red Zone ● Villa Tunari A Isinuta B

and strawberries. But only the hardy coca plant provides genuine incentives to growers. The real substitution drive occurring in past years has been towards coca and away from other crops. Coca's contribution to the net value of Bolivian agricultural production increased from eight per cent in 1980 to 19 per cent in 1988.

Cash compensation offered to growers prepared to pull up their coca bushes has also failed to motivate eradication. The sum of \$2,000 per hectare destroyed proved insufficient to allow farmers to generate a new means of subsistence. Moreover, producers were embittered by official commitments being repeatedly broken: bureaucracy and corruption resulted in few receiving the promised payment, even when their plantations had already been uprooted.

With market forces conspiring against coca eradication and crop substitution, armed repression is the next step. In May 1990, the Bolivian government, anxious not to lose foreign aid, succumbed to US pressure and signed an agreement to militarize the anti-drug campaign. In April this year, hours after approval was hastily pushed through the Bolivian parliament, 90 tons of equipment and 12 military advisers

arrived from the US in preparation for the coca war. By November, 112 US army officials are to provide combat training for 2,000 Bolivian soldiers: 'The same basic instruction a US light-infantry battalion would receive – only in a shorter time', according to a US major supervising the first batch of recruits.

For the Bolivian military, drug repression is a profitable concern. Through President Bush's 'Andean Initiative', US support to the Bolivian armed forces has leapt from \$6 million in 1989 to \$36 million this year. Many Bolivians, harbouring traumatic memories of the bloody 1980 coup by the 'cocaine generals', are concerned that strengthening the military will mean new threats to the country's fragile democracy.

Coca cushion

The drive to militarize uncovers a curious contradiction in Bolivian society: it is in almost no-one's interest here to fight the trade in coca and cocaine, and the Government is no exception. The neo-liberal 'New Economic Policy' (NEP) introduced in 1985, designed to hasten debt payments, stop hyperinflation and cut public spending, rests firmly on a cushion of

coca and cocaine dollars which equal the value of legal exports.

Coca income has eased social tension by providing a safety valve for thousands who have lost jobs through NEP austerity measures. While some have migrated to the Chapare, swelling the overall number of coca producers to an estimated 60,000, many more benefit indirectly through increased commerce and services in an informal economy which is largely sustained by laundered drug money. Two thirds of urban workers now depend on informal activities in the face of rising unemployment in other sectors.

The coca economy also supports a floating population of traders involved in peripheral activities in the production zones. 'I came here two years ago with the idea of trying to get ahead in life', says Ignacio, who lives with his wife and children at the end of the Red Zone in Isinuta. 'I don't grow coca; I'm a logger. But of course, everything I earn depends on the money generated by the drug traffickers – without them, there's no cash circulating. I travel with my trade, so if business goes downhill I just clear out. For the growers, there's no option – everything they have is here.'

(cont'd overleaf)

For Chapare farmers the 'big fish' who run the Bolivian end of the drugs trade are almost mythical entities. 'They' have the power, the money, the arms – and the knack of keeping well clear of the area, especially when things get hot.

In a remote province of the northern Beni region, where 'cocaine factories' lie buried in the jungle, 44 small aircraft were impounded in three recent raids by anti-drug squads, who reckoned that their haul represented about a quarter of the fleet operating in the area. Predictably, no traffickers were captured. The hierarchy remains intact, with the big bosses at a safe distance, the dealers handling sufficient funds to pay off the police and the growers providing coca for the drug industry and cannon fodder for its enemies.

'The Government has got to find a solution for the growers,' muses Ignacio as his toddler plays under the rickety table on the mud floor of his bamboo shack. 'If the military come in here, we can do nothing against them – they have arms, we don't.'

Down the road at a bar-room table, a pack of Leopards play dice, laughing raucously, camouflage caps and machine guns by their sides. The self-styled 'Leopards' are really the UMOPAR, or 'Mobile Rural Patrol', a special US-trained police unit

with the lucrative task of repressing coca producers and, more sporadically, the traffickers themselves.

'A few months ago, we couldn't even get into this zone,' brags a young, fiercely moustached officer. 'But now, we've got these people dominated.' 'These people' shoot wary glances at them from the opposite end of the room. The barmaid serves them, efficient and unsmiling. Isinuta is occupied territory and the invaders are treated with hostile respect.

Cameras under our jackets, we hang around the doorway of the Leopards' lair, a dingy shed, trying to look like innocent tourists who have just gone for a three-hour spin to the end of the Red Zone, undeterred on our jaunt by a few rivers whose muddy watermarks reach up to the windows of our Toyota taxi.

Chatting up the Leopards is a necessary prelude to getting some photos, and their egos are predictably responsive to flattery. We show due admiration for the charred wreck of a Colombian small aircraft shot down a month before with a cargo of cocaine paste.

'Go on, pose like Rambo in front of your trophy,' I venture as a last resort. The guard has obviously seen the movie and does a fair imitation of Sylvester Stallone,

machine gun cocked at a provocative angle. That one photo compensates for the discomfort of the six-hour drive as we roar back to Cochabamba in the dark, filthy and shivering on squelching wet seats after taking the Toyota back through the rivers and out of the Red Zone.

In mid-June, 700 coca growers and their families left Villa Tunari to begin a month-long march to La Paz with banners proclaiming their cause: 'Dignity and National Sovereignty'. After a week, the march was violently broken up by armed troops and police. Result: one dead, 20 wounded and 20 leaders imprisoned.

Growing union

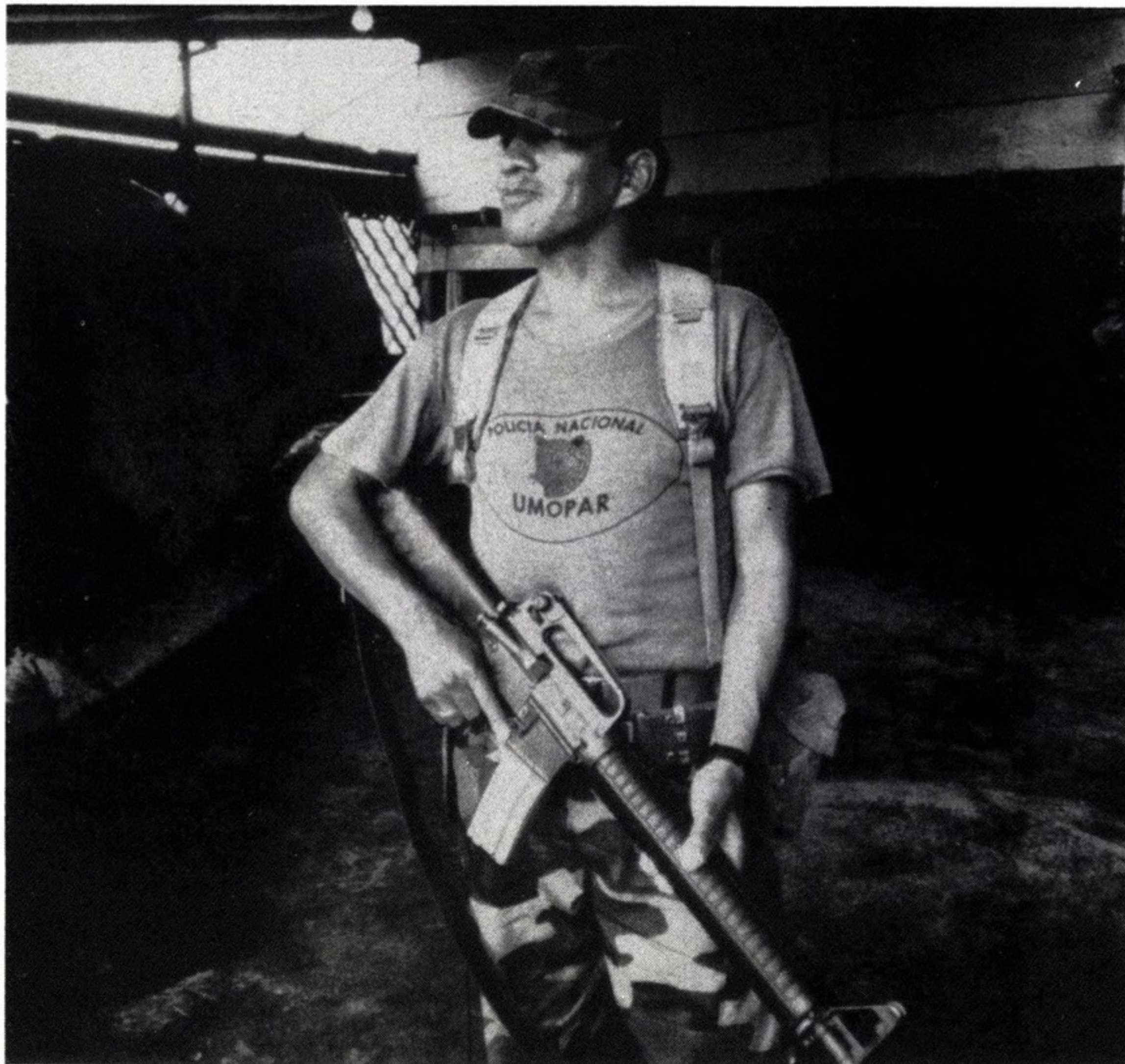
The coca growers have one strategic arm in their struggle: their unions, affiliated to the national confederation of peasant farmers and to Bolivia's central trade union organization, the COB. In the valley town of Cochabamba, a network of progressive non-governmental institutions has signed an agreement with the five local growers' unions to jointly draw up and negotiate an alternative development proposal for the Chapare. Following the violent break-up of their march, the producers' organizations declared: 'No development is possible in the midst of a war, and it is still less viable if we are considered the enemy'.

'In our view, official policy is totally hypocritical,' says union leader Nestor Bravo bitterly. 'If the US claims to be fighting against drugs, why is it the first nation to stuff Bolivia full of its own pharmaceutical products, its alcohol and tobacco – not to speak of the chemicals used to refine coca into cocaine? It seems to us that their real aim is not to combat the drugs trade. What they're really trying to do is to maintain their own monopolies and keep us down with their power and arms.'

In May this year, Andean coca producers met in La Paz to share experiences and work on joint strategies to defend their culture and livelihood. Among the participants was Genaro Cahuana, farming union leader from Quillabamba in the Peruvian province of Cuzco. 'This is a historic event for us, an encounter of Andean cultures which we all defend,' said Cahuana. 'We want to break down this barrier of misunderstanding – coca is not the same as cocaine, they're quite different. If coca is wiped out, will drug addiction disappear? We don't think so. And as for militarization – for us, that means violation of human rights, backwardness and poverty. We're doing all we can to let people know, at home and abroad, that we have every right to defend ourselves against this unjust policy being imposed on us.'

Susanna Rance, a regular contributor to the **NI**, lives in La Paz, Bolivia.

Posing like Rambo, the leopard in his lair.



MARK HOWARD

THE HARDER THEY COME...

Popular myth has it that heroin and cocaine are especially harmful because they are instantly addictive. The truth is less dramatic. Like all drugs they can be dangerous, but no more so than legal drugs like alcohol or tobacco. Prohibition makes heroin and cocaine more harmful because of the violence, ignorance and fear that come with it. Here are some simple facts about these two hard drugs.

HEROIN

Properties: a derivative of morphine, the classic analgesic – pain-reliever – which in turn derives from the opium poppy. A water-soluble powder, sometimes sniffed or smoked, but more often injected into the vein.

Effects: stimulates, then depresses the activity of the central nervous system. Frequently it produces an initial surge of pleasure, followed by a dream-like state that lasts for two to six hours.

Risks: addiction is often likely, but is *not* automatic. Only 12 per cent of GIs addicted in Vietnam had re-established the habit three years after returning to the US. **Damage to health:** if taken in chemically pure form, there are no adverse side effects other than mild constipation. **Overdose:** a large dose reduces the rate of breathing and can lead to death. But addicted people develop tolerance, making it difficult for them to overdose.

Harm: Many overdose deaths result from poor general health, rather than acute intoxication. The danger of **infection**, including HIV, is increased because prohibition restricts the availability of clean syringes. Harmful **impurities** are common because there is no control over the dilution of pure heroin. **Crime and violence** result from the criminal world being the source of supply. Heroin itself does not produce violence, but users may resort to crime to finance their habit.

COCAINE

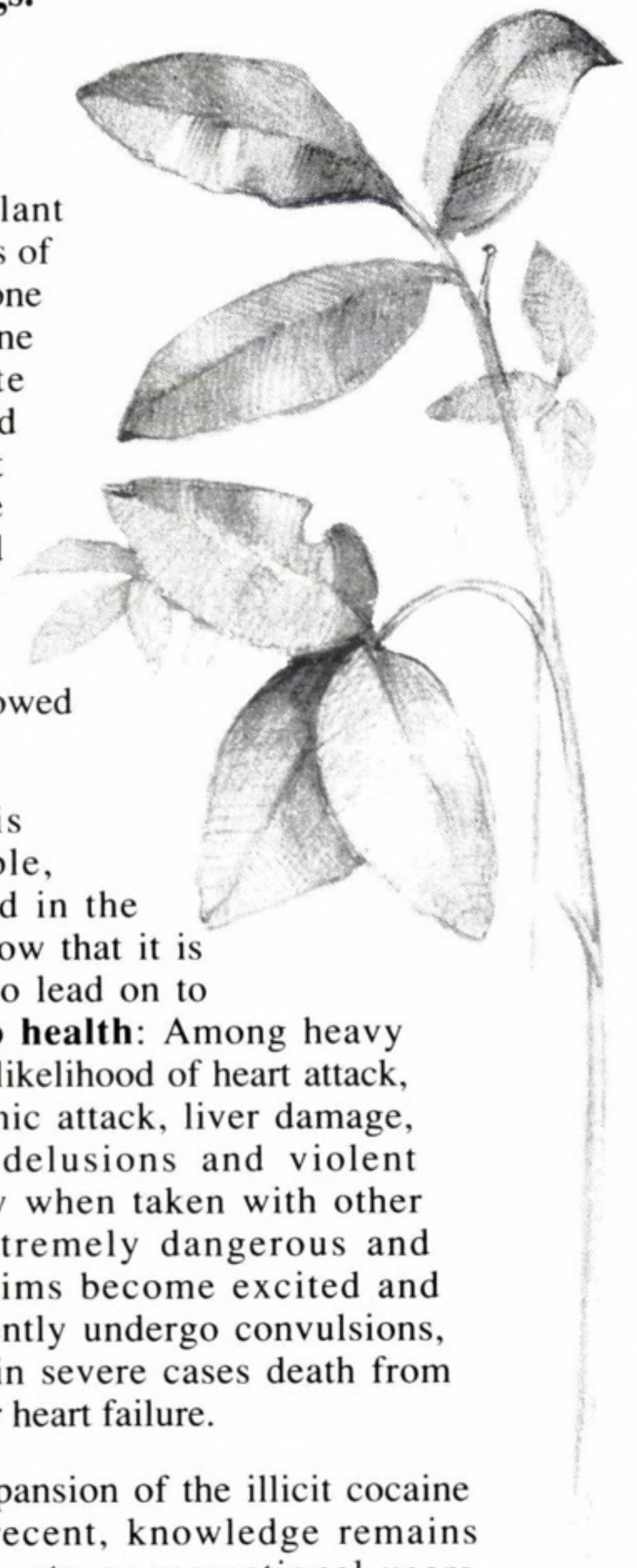
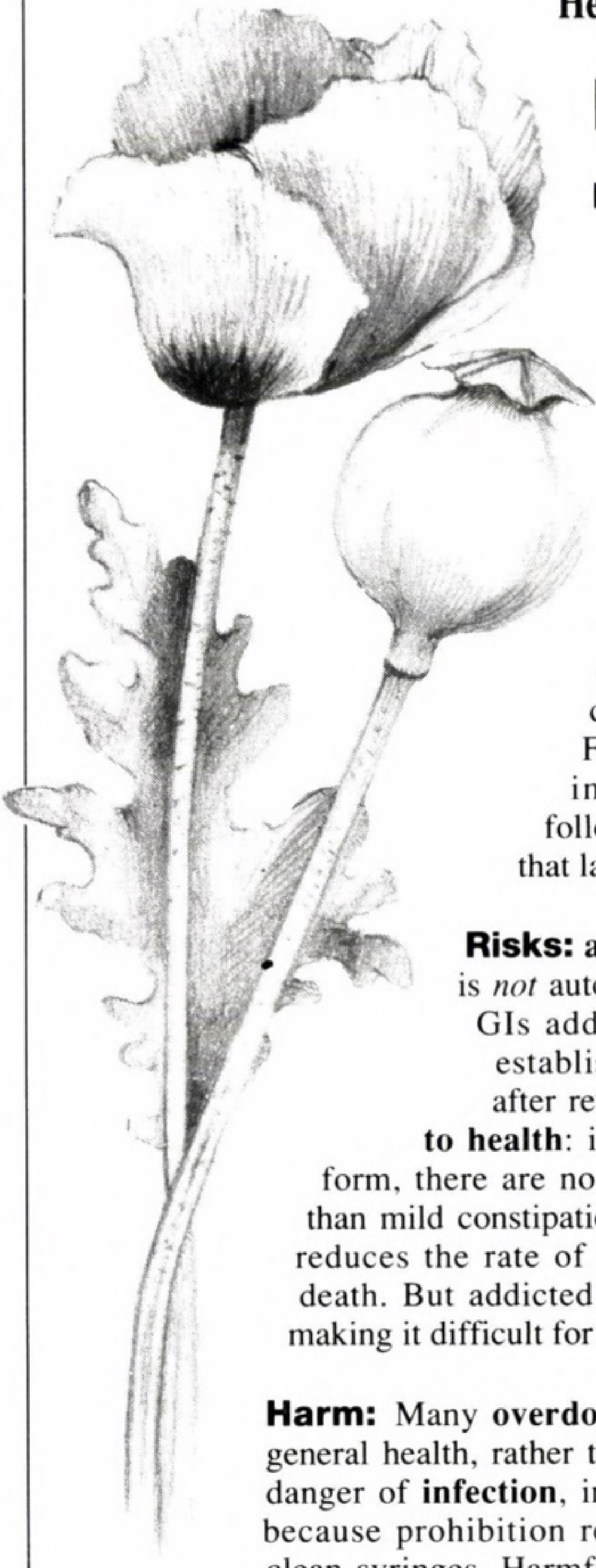
Properties: a stimulant extracted from the leaves of the coca bush, used in one of two forms. As cocaine hydrochloride, a white powder, it is inhaled through the nose. But cocaine can also be dissolved in water and injected, or reduced to Crack and smoked.

Effects: euphoria followed by depression.

Risks: addiction is uncommon but possible, particularly when used in the Crack form. Studies show that it is rare for moderate use to lead on to heavy use. **Damage to health:** Among heavy users there is increased likelihood of heart attack, brain haemorrhage, panic attack, liver damage, psychotic episodes, delusions and violent behaviour – especially when taken with other drugs. **Overdose:** extremely dangerous and sometimes fatal. Victims become excited and confused and subsequently undergo convulsions, depression, coma and in severe cases death from respiratory depression or heart failure.

Harm: because the expansion of the illicit cocaine market is relatively recent, knowledge remains restricted. Most moderate or recreational users experience no long-term adverse effects. The same harm from **impurities, crime and violence** applies as with heroin.

This account is based on Bruce K Alexander, *Peaceful Measures: Canada's Way Out of the 'War on Drugs'*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1990; Mary H Cooper, *The Business of Drugs*, Congressional Quarterly Inc, Washington, 1990; *UN Chronicle*, May 1987; Peter Cohen, *Drugs as a Social Construct*, University of Amsterdam, 1990.



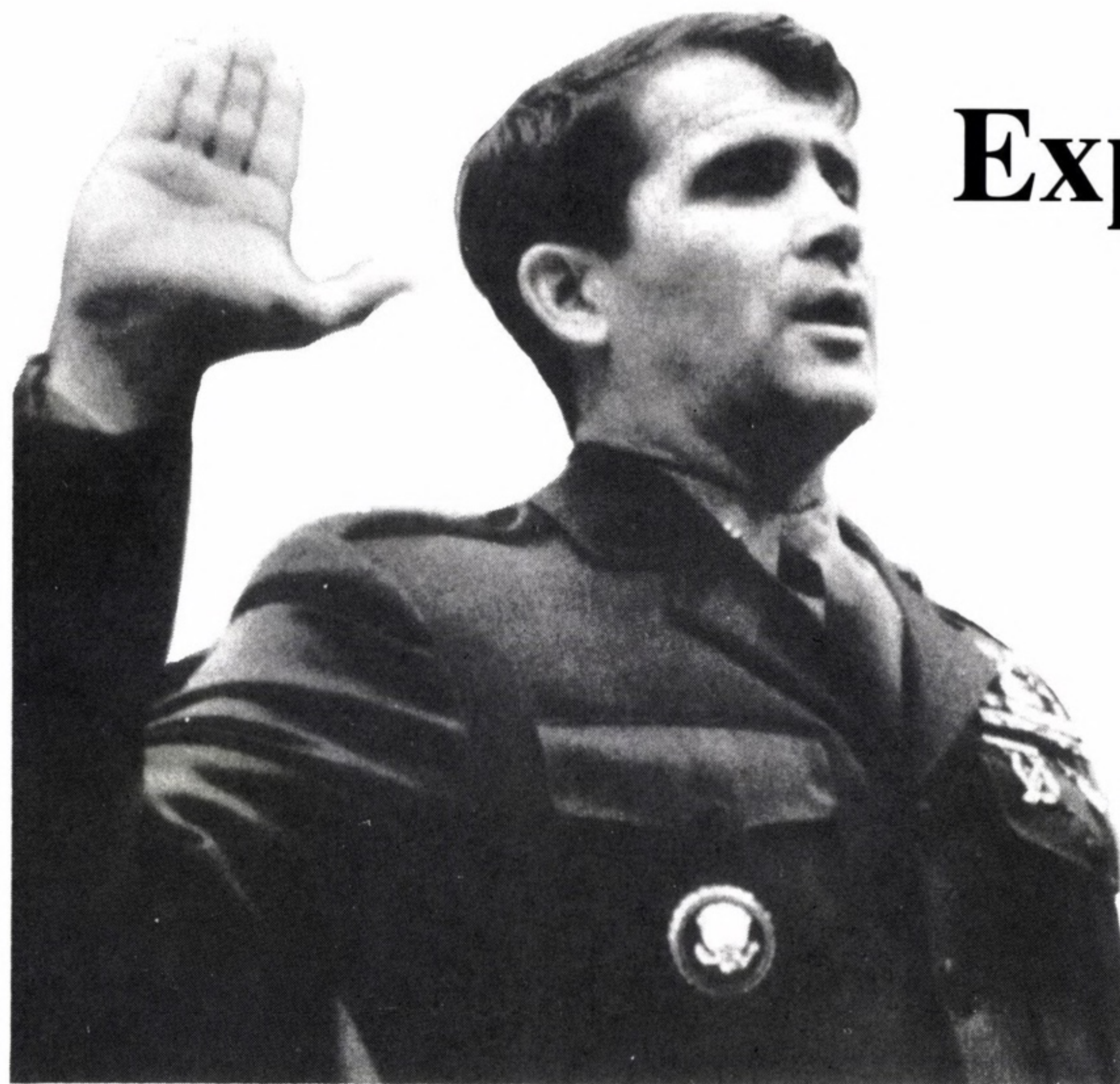
ILLUSTRATIONS: CLIVE OFFLEY

Explosive mix

The Central American cocktail of drug-running, CIA meddling and corrupt Presidents was shaken by the US invasion of Panama. Shaken but not stirred. Alexander Cockburn and Andrew Cohen reveal how the recipe hasn't changed.

Colonel Oliver North (left) swears false testimony to the US Congress to hide drug deals with Manuel Noriega of Panama (below right).

PHOTOS: POPPERFOTO/REUTER



IN times of war truth is said to be the first casualty; by implication in times of peace truth should stay out of the sick bay. But it's getting tougher to tell war from peace as the US war on drugs progresses in Latin America.

The invasion of Panama on 21 December 1989 was dramatic confirmation that the war on drugs means the substitution of guns for justice, followed by business as before. The invasion left 20,000 homeless; the precise number of dead will never be known, though estimates of 1,000 now seem plausible. US officials ceased keeping a tally within days of the invasion, but members of the 193rd Infantry Brigade told author Godfrey Harris that hundreds of body bags were transported to Honduras for clandestine burial.

The reason for this carnage was, ostensibly, the 'narcoterrorism' of President Manuel Noriega. While he was on the CIA's payroll Noriega did indeed engage in real terrorism. He plotted with Oliver North to sabotage factories in Managua in 1985 and 1986 and offered North the services of British mercenaries and Israeli commandos in his pay. It wasn't for this, however, that he was eventually hauled off to Miami while the US military installed democracy in Panama at gunpoint. His arrest was to face serious drug charges.

Yet little changed as a result. It is hard to say which took off faster in Panama after the invasion, the crime rate or the drug trade. The US-created Public Force was filled with Noriega's old thugs – one reason why today there are almost 200 rent-a-cop agencies in Panama City.

Then there is the question of Noriega's successor as President, Guillermo Endara. A few weeks after 'Operation Just Cause', and while the cover-up of popular resistance to the GIs and the number of civilian casualties were still under way, the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) quietly undercut Washington's official rationale for the invasion. The agency provided evidence to Panama's new Attorney General that the Panama-based bank Interbanco was laundering Colombian drug money. This wasn't so surprising. What was remarkable was that the Secretary of Interbanco's board of directors was none other than Guillermo Endara, the new President.

The Interbanco scandal surfaced in the Panamanian press late last summer, just a few months before 500 American troops suppressed a police mutiny which the Endara government proved powerless to contain. Panamanians seemed less upset by the drug connection than by the revelation that President Endara had longstanding links with Noriega's unsavory cabinet ministers Rodolfo Chiari and Jorge Ritter, who also sat on the Interbanco board. Endara promised to resign his seat on the Interbanco board but in the midst of the police mutiny he forgot. He did have time to oversee the bank's reorganization, leaving his relatives and his political allies with a controlling interest.

Panamanian Attorney General Rogelio Cruz delayed investigating Interbanco for more than eight months. He himself was directly implicated in other 'dirty money'

dealings. He had sat on the board of First Interamericas Bank, owned by the Colombian Cali drug cartel leader Gilberto Rodriguez and liquidated following US pressure in 1985. Endara's new Treasury Minister and his new Chief Justice were also former directors of First Interamericas.

Interbanco was declared insolvent and suddenly liquidated last January, but that doesn't let Endara off the hook. Last August Yvette Torres, an agent of the DEA, revealed a long list of Panama-based banks and corporations owned by Augusto Falcion and Salvador Magluta, whom the DEA accuses of running cocaine into Florida. Endara is the treasurer for six of their businesses.

Interbanco was insolvent because it had loaned as much as 80 per cent of its total declared capital to a single borrower, Celso Fernandez Espina. Spanish narcotics authorities have linked him to both the Medellín and Cali drug cartels in Colombia. One of Espina's closest financial associates is Juan Matta Balesteros, a 'Class 1' DEA offender now in prison in the US in connection with the 1985 murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena. A 1983 US Customs report identifies Matta as one of the largest drug traffickers known to the Reagan administration, noting that he had transported 850 kilos of cocaine for the Cali cartel in January 1982.

None of this, however, presented an obstacle to 'business as usual'. Even after the 1983 US Customs report, the State Department awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars in 'humanitarian' aid for

the Contras in Nicaragua to Matta Balesteros' Honduran cargo firm, SETCO Air. His indictment in the US was held up until 1988, after the Iran-Contra scandal had broken. The DEA shut down its Honduras office 'for lack of sufficient funds' at the same time that the CIA expanded its operations in Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital, and only a month after Customs asked the Honduras DEA agent to investigate SETCO.

As for President Endara, if it's protection he wants he could clip the CIA's advertisement from the *New York Times*. His predecessor, Noriega, signed on for a six-digit salary in 1976, when George Bush was CIA director. Noriega's income was interrupted only during the Carter administration and the unpleasant two years before the invasion. He did have to earn his pay. He let the Medellín cartel fly cocaine through Panama for a mere \$200,000 a trip and he turned in their competitors to the US.

Noriega also arranged for pilots to fly arms to the Contras and cocaine back through Panama. As Senator John Kerry's narcotics subcommittee concluded: 'There was substantial evidence of drug smuggling through the war zones on the part of individual Contras, Contra suppliers, Contra pilots, mercenaries who worked with the Contras and Contra supporters throughout the region... Senior US policy-makers were not immune to the idea that drug money was a perfect solution to the Contra's funding problems.'

The hypocrisy of the so-called 'war on drugs' has been documented by Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall. They have exposed the foreign 'assets' that the DEA shared with the CIA; their underworld drug connections; their ties to the Chilean and Argentinian secret police and their efforts (abetted by Oliver North and the Justice Department) to silence witnesses who could attest to the Contra-drug connection.¹



The version according to President Bush:

In his first public explanation of the invasion President George Bush gave four reasons:

- To protect US lives – Panamanian troops were reportedly threatening US civilians and military personnel in the country.
- To defend the Panama Canal – although there had been no direct threat to close it, the deteriorating relationship between the US and Panamanian governments increased the risk that traffic in the canal would be disrupted.
- To restore democracy to Panama – the country had been ruled by the military since 1968.
- To stop drug trafficking and to bring General Manuel Antonio Noriega to justice – persistent accusations linked him to the Colombian drug cartels. A Panamanian bank had been convicted in the US of laundering drug money.

But earlier this year an Independent Commission of Inquiry, headed by former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark, published its findings.¹ They tell a very different story:

The version according to the Independent Commission of Inquiry:

- In 1977 Panamanian President Omar Torrijos signed three treaties with US President Jimmy Carter. The treaties affirmed that the Panama Canal would be turned over completely to Panama by the year 2000.
- There was also agreement that the 14 US bases in Panama would be returned to Panamanian control.

'The long and sordid history of the CIA involvement with the Sicilian Mafia,' conclude Scott and Marshall, 'the French Corsican underworld, the heroin producers of South-East Asia's Golden Triangle, the marijuana- and cocaine-trafficking exiles in Miami and the opium smuggling *mujaheddin* of Afghanistan simply reinforces the lesson of the Contra period: far from considering drug networks their enemy, US intelligence organizations have made them an essential ally in the covert expansion of American influence abroad.'

Just as the war on drugs in the cities of the US has come to mean police-and-prisons divorced from any kind of social or economic solution, the logic of the war on drugs abroad, such as it is, gives way to the same, stark absurdity. Bush's promised aid to Panama, after devastating the country, shrank from billions to \$450 million. According to the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, the proportion of Panamanian poor has risen from 33 per cent of the 2.3 million population before the invasion to 50

The reasons why

Why did the US invade Panama on 21 December 1989?

There are competing explanations.

● In January 1990 a Panamanian appointed by the Panamanian government was due to oversee the administration of the Canal for the first time. Since the invasion the appointment has been stopped.

● For five years before the invasion the US had been demanding the renegotiation of the 1977 treaty agreement on the closing of US military bases. General Noriega refused to comply.

● Admiral John Poindexter (of Iran-Contra fame) demanded repeatedly on behalf of the US government that Nicaraguan Contra forces be based in Panama. General Noriega refused.

● The US also demanded that Panama end its economic and political co-operation with Nicaragua and Cuba. General Noriega refused.

● The invasion took place just weeks before elections in Nicaragua, sending a threatening message to Nicaraguan electors about what could happen if they voted for the Sandinistas.

● Since the invasion three US military bases which had been returned to Panama have now been taken back by the US Southern Command.

● The Independent Commission discovered a chart giving the names of US State Department and Pentagon officials in Panama who are in charge of every ministry of the new Panamanian government.

● Since 1856 there have been 16 invasions and military interventions by the US in the Panama region.

¹ *The US Invasion of Panama: The Truth Behind Operation 'Just Cause'*, The Independent Commission of Inquiry on the US Invasion of Panama, South End Press, Boston, 1991.

per cent today. A recent seminar of Panamanian economists with the Isthmian Foundation reported that 546,200 people were living in extreme poverty and another 461,000 in poverty. Unemployment hovers around 25 per cent and the figure reaches 50 per cent when combined with underemployment.

Meanwhile the Panamanian press reports that the Endara government has approved millions of dollars in military aid. While the privileged conduct business as usual and US policy 'stabilizes' Latin America under cover of new excuses, life for ordinary Panamanians just gets harder. In this 'war on drugs' it seems there are never first casualties, just ongoing ones. If the US wanted to keep the Third World poverty-ridden and drug-distracted then the war on drugs could be no better war. ■

Alexander Cockburn is a regular columnist for *The Nation*, New York, where Andrew Cohen also works.

¹ *Cocaine Politics*, University of California Press, 1991

Peddling delusions

Popular fears of drug addiction have been exploited to maximum political effect in the US, argues Edward Jay Epstein. He begins a whistle-stop tour of folk history with 'the most kissed man in America', Richard Pearson Hobson (right), and unearths both the origins of populist scare-mongering and the issues it was designed to hide.

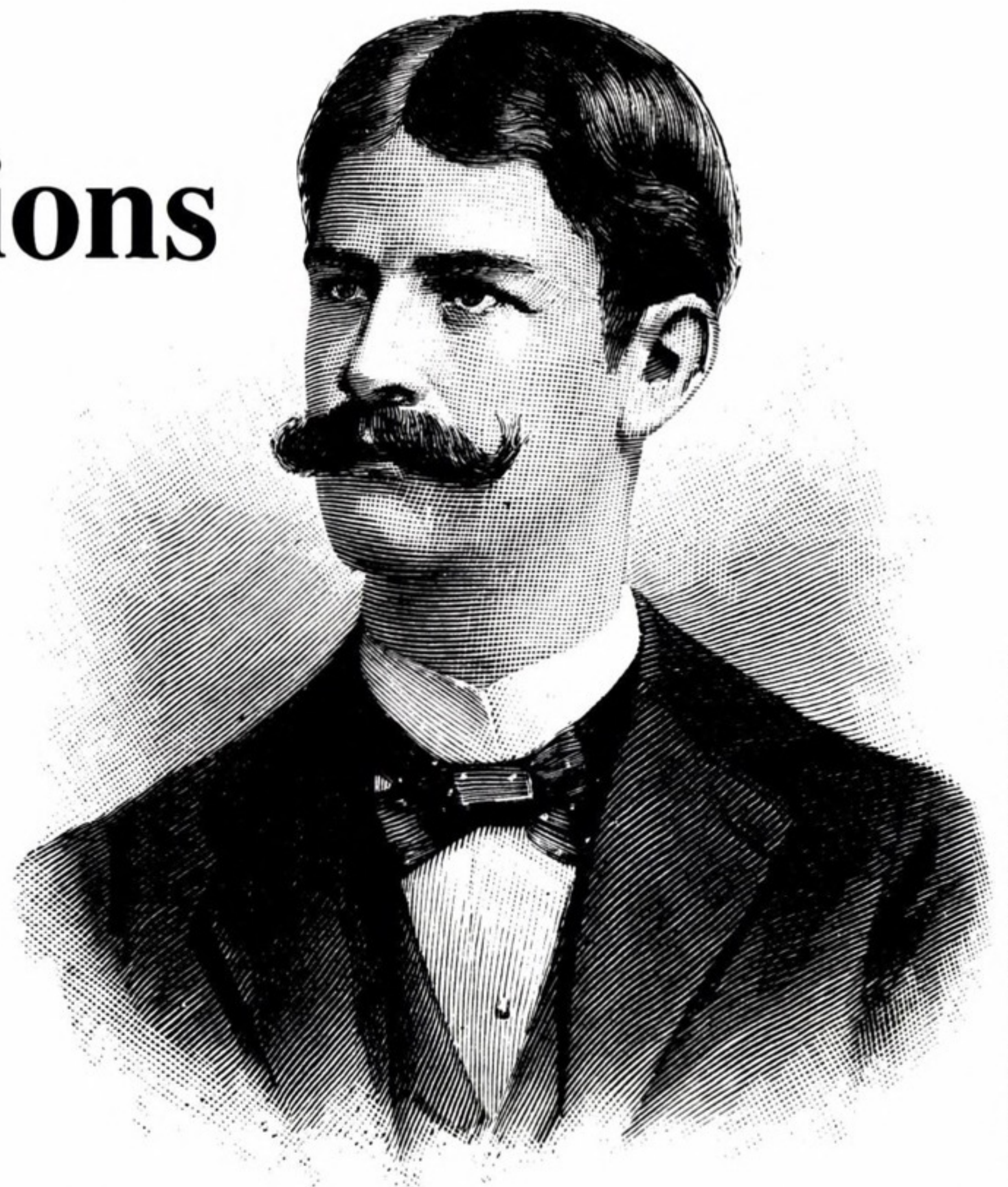


ILLUSTRATION: MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY

ON June 3, 1898 Richmond Pearson Hobson, a newly graduated naval lieutenant, guided the USS Merrimac into the narrow mouth of Santiago Harbour in Cuba. The Spanish-American War had just broken out and the US Navy planned for Hobson to trap the Spanish fleet by scuttling his ship in the main channel. To this end he had heroically tied a string of homemade torpedoes to the hull of the ship.

But, owing to a failure in the ship's steering mechanism, he was unable to get the tub into the blockading position before the charges exploded. The Merrimac sank in the wrong place. Hobson was captured by the Spanish and repatriated after the Spanish surrendered.

The US Navy, faced with the difficult choice of court-martialing Hobson or decorating him for his valor, chose the latter. President McKinley personally decorated him and the Navy arranged a national speaking tour. His popularity grew and he became known as 'the most kissed man in America'. By 1906, the celebrated hero of Santiago Harbour had been elected to Congress.

He was a hero in search of a grand cause. His first thought was to call for America to build a vast navy to protect the world from the 'yellow peril' of Japan. When this failed and his speaking engagements dwindled, he switched his moral drumfire to a far more pervasive enemy – alcohol, which he termed 'the great destroyer'.

In 1921 the National Prohibition legislation outlawing alcohol was passed. Neither the crime rate nor death rate was dimin-

ished: indeed, both rose during Prohibition. But Captain Hobson was left without a cause once more. He found a new 'greatest evil', which could not only be held accountable for all crime and vice but had the added advantage over alcohol of being a foreign import. This new devil was a drug called heroin.

Heroin (from the German *heroisch* – 'large, powerful') was first developed by the A G Bayer Company of Germany in 1898 as a painkiller. Derived from morphine, and sometimes prescribed as a new means of treating morphine addiction, by the early 1900s heroin confronted the US with a growing number of addicts. In 1914 Congress passed the Harrison Narcotics Act, which attempted to control narcotics through licensing and taxation.

A spate of newspaper stories during the final days of World War I suggested that Germany was attempting to addict the entire American population to heroin by mixing the powder with cosmetics. And in New York City public officials increasingly attributed bank robberies and anarchist bombings to heroin-crazed fiends.

The living dead

Hobson quickly saw the potential of reorganizing the available bits of information and assertions about heroin into the specter of the vampire. In a frenzy of public appearances, lectures and writings he termed narcotics addicts 'the living dead': 'The addict has an insane desire to make addicts of others,' he added.

Hobson's legend of the living dead lived after him. The apocalyptic battle he

depicted between the forces of good and the army of addicts provided countless politicians, police officials and medical bureaucrats with a conceptual framework from which they could advance their particular interests.

It was brilliantly refined into a national political issue in the 1960s by Nelson Rockefeller. In projecting a nationwide 'reign of terror' he had at his disposal an unprecedented family fortune – which began with his great-grandfather, a nineteenth century dealer in 'herbal remedies' and other bottled medicines which often contained opium as an active ingredient.

Nelson first learned the techniques of propagating and controlling information when he was appointed co-ordinator of inter-American affairs at the age of 32 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He was given the responsibility of running a \$150 million propaganda agency in Latin America. In 1958 he decided to run for elective office as Governor of New York State and was easily elected. But he was decisively beaten to the Republican presidential nomination by the hard-line Senator Barry Goldwater at the 1964 convention.

After this defeat he developed an issue which seemed to appeal to both the hard-line and liberal-to-moderate elements – the drug issue. By proposing measures for oppressing drug users that were more draconian than anything ever proposed by Senator Goldwater, Rockefeller hoped to placate law-and-order Republicans. At the same time, polls showed that the more liberal elements would not object to measures that enhanced their personal safety.

Rockefeller worked to establish in the popular imagination a connection between violent crimes and drugs.

Deadly infection

During his campaign for re-election as governor in 1966 he demanded 'an all-out war on drugs and addiction'. He rushed through a law providing for the involuntary confinement of drug addicts for up to five years for 'treatment', even if they were not convicted of any crime. There was, in 1966, no program of medical treatment for addiction in New York State, nor even a concept of what addiction was or how it could be treated.

When Frank O'Connor, his Democratic party rival in the election, opposed the new law Rockefeller told a rally in Brooklyn: 'Frank O'Connor's election would mean narcotic addicts would continue free to roam the street – to mug, snatch purses, to steal, even to murder, or to spread the deadly infection that afflicts them possibly to your own son or daughter. Half the crime in New York City is committed by narcotic addicts.'

He never gave a source for this assertion. And the size of the addict population proved to be conveniently flexible. To demonstrate the need for greater police measures or more judges Rockefeller and his staff expanded the number of putative addicts from 25,000 in 1966 to 200,000 in 1973. When he wanted to show the efficacy of his program, the army of addicts was conveniently contracted to under 100,000.

President Nixon found his own use for the heroin epidemic. Police, doctors, judges, social workers, community leaders, politicians, just about everyone, were rightly concerned with the spread of heroin addiction. It touched on the rawest nerve in

middle-class America: anxiety over the alienation of children from their parents, the deterioration of urban life, the increase in crime and violence and the corruption of the police.

By playing on these fears and exciting them to fever pitch, Nixon's men laid the basis for a massive war on drugs: a war that would permit the administration to create new agencies with strange-sounding acronyms like ONNI, ODALE and DEA; to shuffle personnel around in the FBI, CIA, Justice Department and even the army; and effectively to rewire the chain of command so that these agencies reported directly to the Administration. The new opiate war provided the perfect cover for a seizure of power.

But before Nixon could take advantage of and consolidate his new agency of fear, the Watergate scandal unraveled. The putative 'heroin epidemic' was over – in fact, the increase in addiction had peaked and began to subside years before Nixon's drug war had even begun.

But the drop in heroin addiction did not solve the problems of urban crime or social disorganization. Left behind in the wake of the hype and excitement of Nixon's heroin war was a legacy of fundamental misconceptions about the nature of the drug problem – misconceptions that persist in guiding US policy and politics today.

The most serious confusion was of cause and effect. It was conveniently assumed for the purpose of public policy that the appalling living conditions in inner cities were caused by drug abuse, instead of vice versa. The result has been the search for a magic-bullet solution in far-away lands for the endemic race, social and economic problems in the United States. Not since Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* has

there been such an organized flight from reality by a nation.

The folly of attempting to fight the most recent war, this time on cocaine, is suggested by a single statistic: the entire cocaine market in the US can be supplied by just one cargo plane. There are approximately 20,000 cargo planes available on the cocaine route, not to mention 17,000 ships. High profile moves which look good before the TV cameras often result in making the cocaine business more efficient. Both Congress and the media have been fed sensational statistics on the value of captured narcotics – the so-called 'street value', which allows government officials to multiply what they have bought or found by up to 2,000 per cent.

Flimflam

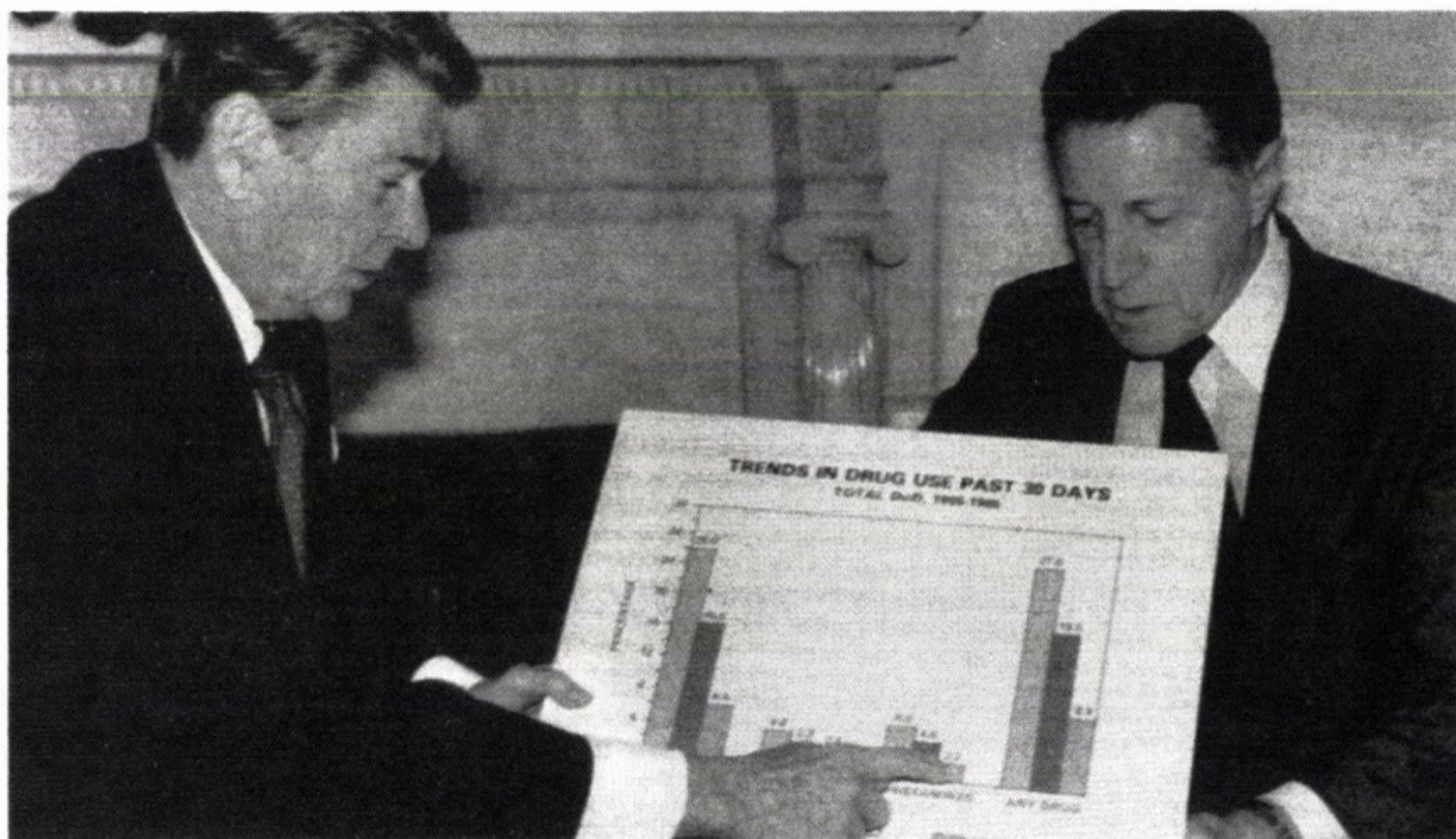
Not everyone is fooled by the flimflam. I asked John Ehrlichman, who supervised Nixon's heroin war before he himself went to prison on Watergate cover-up charges, why the Reagan-Bush war on cocaine was producing such meagre results. He answered, 'They didn't try to learn from our mistakes... They went right back to square zero.'

Now George Bush has made the drug war his number-one priority. As did his predecessors, Bush opted to internationalize what was essentially an American problem. Again the war on drugs turned into a military exercise against foreign devils. By decimating one or another supplier – like the dreaded Colombian cartels – the US Government did not eliminate drug consumption. It merely made room for a new set of smugglers. As long as Americans want to buy a product, someone will sell it to them – usually with tacit police co-operation.

If the past is any guide, the present diversion from reality may be even more damaging to the fabric of American society than Nixon's power grab. Even if the Bush administration built a ten-foot-high wall of barbed wire, sealed off US airspace with a Star Wars defence system and barred all industrial imports in which drugs might be concealed, the problems of the inner city would not go away. Nor would unemployment, crime and racism. If anything, narcotics wars themselves have become the opiate of the politicians. So long as their fascination continues, and the narcocracy grows, little progress can be expected elsewhere. And so long as this escapism ignores the possibility that drug abuse may be the result, not the cause, of the permanent state of disorder and despair in the inner cities, the war on drugs can be expected to produce nothing more than intermittent diversions for the media. ■

Edward Jay Epstein is the author of *Agency of Fear* (Verso, 1990) and lives in New York.

Lies, damned lies and drug statistics. President Reagan tries to figure out the latest invention in 1987, with Casper Weinberger in support.



Operation Peasant Storm

- Objective: to eradicate supply.
- Assessment: supply increasing.
- More illicit drugs are being produced now than ever before. Production often increases when the war heats up - to make up for supplies lost to enforcement agencies.

DRUG PRODUCTION BY REGION (tonnes)

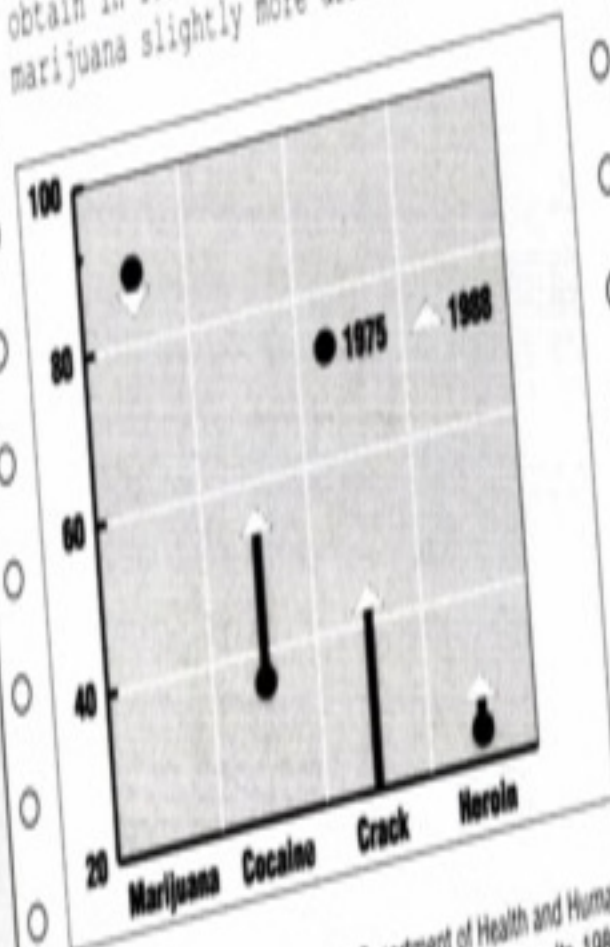
	1985	1989
OPPIUM		
South-West Asia	640	1,005
Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan		
South-East Asia	625	1,333
Burma, Laos, Thailand		
Mexico	25	40
Total	1,290	2,378
COCAINE		
Latin America	151	176
Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador		
MARIJUANA		
Mexico, Colombia, Jamaica, Belize, US	7,070	10,253
HASHISH		
Lebanon, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Morocco	1,150	1,185

Source: US Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, March 1989. 'Minimum estimate' used.

Operation Clean Streets

- Objective: to make drugs harder to obtain.
- Assessment: they are easier to obtain.

When asked the question: 'How difficult do you think it would be for you to get each of the following types of drugs, if you wanted some?' this is how American 16-18 year olds responded - the higher the score (out of 100), the easier they were to find. Cocaine and heroin were easier to obtain in 1988 than they had been in 1975; marijuana slightly more difficult.

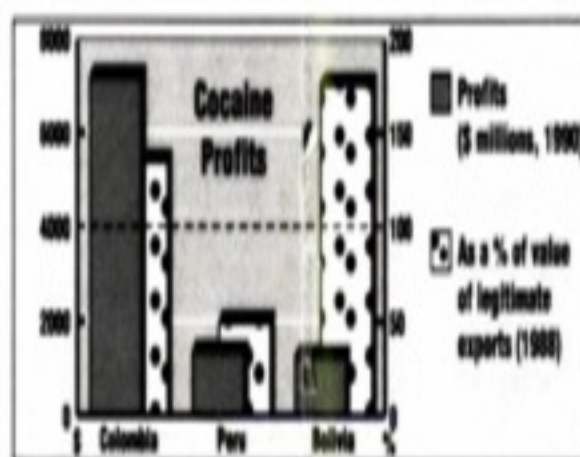


Source: US Department of Health and Human Services, National Survey Results, 1989.

The Intelligence Report

Propaganda is a weapon in war. The NI sifts through the evidence, rejecting all but the most sober claims, and the most conservative statistics, to assess the state of battle in the struggle against illicit drugs. Victory for anti-drug warriors would be a drug-free society - yet that looks like a more distant prospect than ever.

Operation Big Buck



- Objective: to cut profits on the trade.
- Assessment: trade more profitable than ever.

The value of trade in illicit drugs exceeds that of world trade in oil and is surpassed only by arms dealings. For cocaine alone this amounts to \$76 billion, which equals the total national incomes of Colombia, Peru and Bolivia put together.

Sources: Latin American Newsletters, Informe Confidencial 1: Tráfico de Drogas, London 1991 (min. estimates of profits); World Bank, World Development Report 1990; UNDP, Human Development Report 1990.

Operation Hot Pursuit

- Objective: to enforce the law.
- Assessment: increasing financial and human costs.

Estimates of the cost of the drug offensive in the US alone vary from \$15 to \$20 billion per year:

- Financial costs
- Costs of US Federal Government enforcement (Drug Enforcement Administration, Coast Guard, FBI, Customs, Bureau of Prisons): 1981 less than \$1 billion, 1988 \$3 billion plus.
- Cost of enforcement by US local police: \$5 billion in 1986.

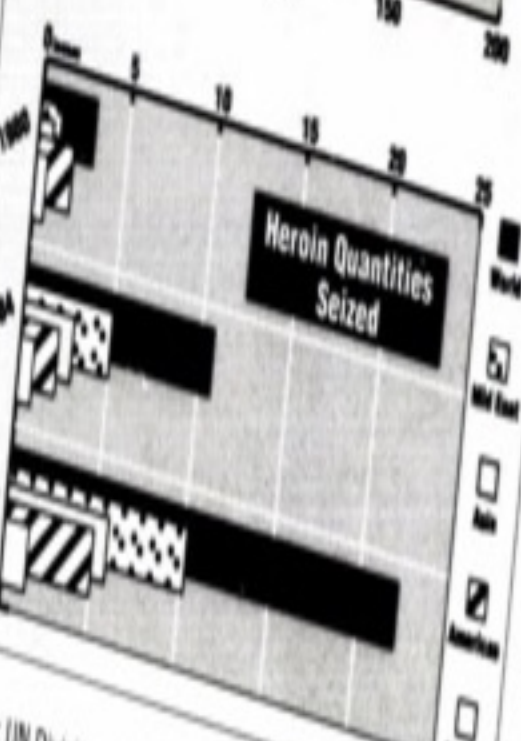
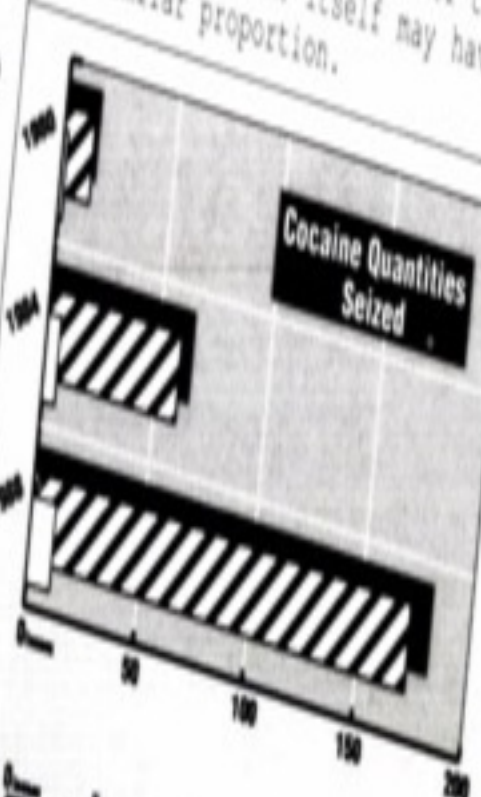
- Human Costs
- By the end of the century drug-law violations will account for at least 50% of the US federal prison population. And the total number of prisoners will have doubled.

- US police make approximately 750,000 arrests every year for drug-law violations. More than 75% are for possession, typically of marijuana.

Source: Prof Ethan A Nadelmann, 'The Case for Legalization', in James A Inciardi, The Drug Legalization Debate, Sage, Newbury Park, California, 1991.

Operation Intercept

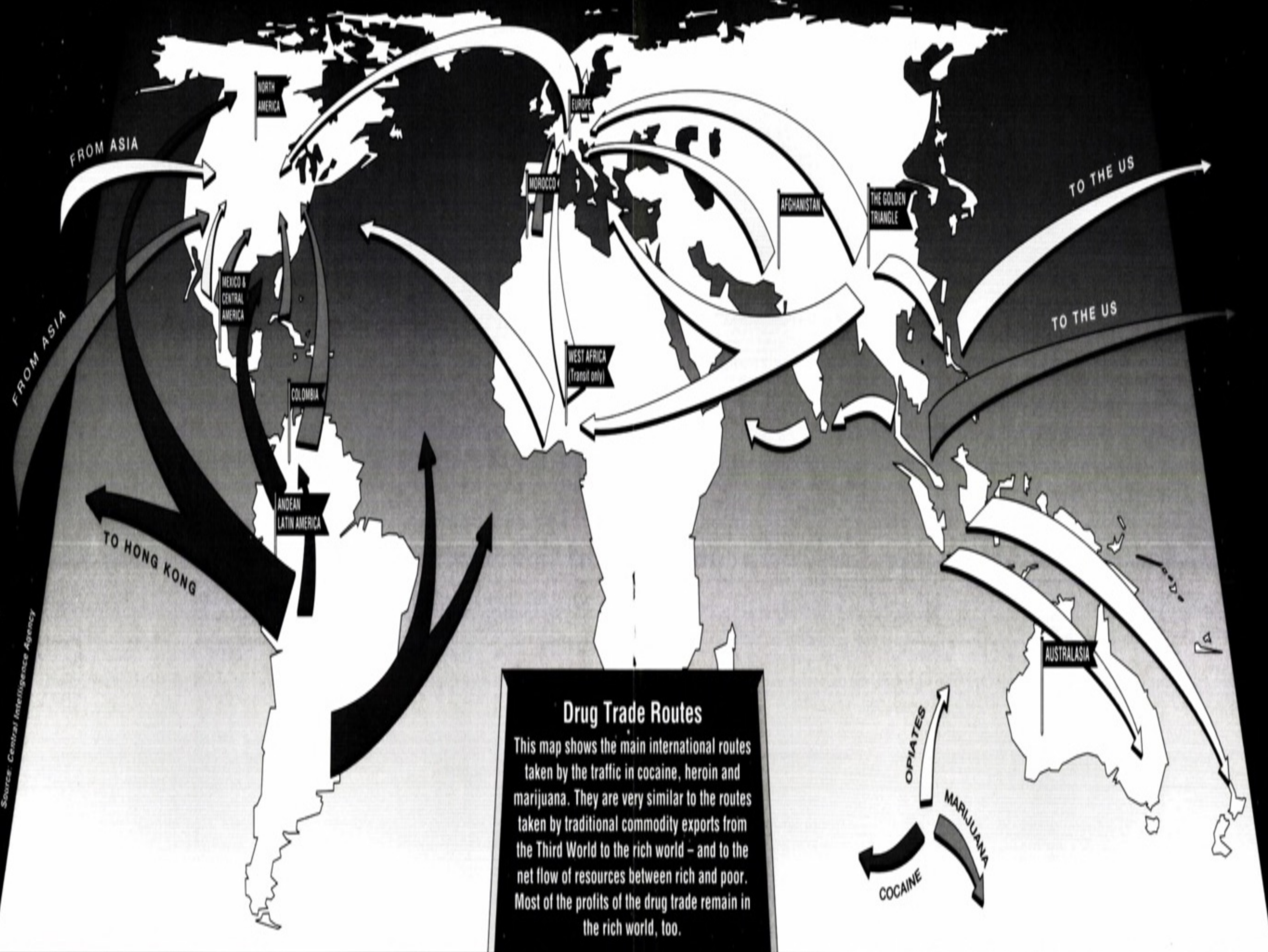
- Objective: to seize supplies.
- Assessment: clear success. Seizures have increased sharply. However, they are usually said to represent 10% of the total trade. So the trade itself may have grown by a similar proportion.



Source: UN Division of Narcotic Drugs, Vienna.

Drug Trade Routes

This map shows the main international routes taken by the traffic in cocaine, heroin and marijuana. They are very similar to the routes taken by traditional commodity exports from the Third World to the rich world - and to the net flow of resources between rich and poor. Most of the profits of the drug trade remain in the rich world, too.



How to make dirty money squeaky clean

Spot the difference between straight and bent money.

Melissa Benn watches the bulging case of drug cash being taken to the cleaners.



CAMERA PRESS

THE British Government's rehearsed outrage at the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) looks a little lame in the light of what a London taxi driver told me recently. A keen reader of *Time*, *Newsweek* and the business pages of the daily papers, he'd known all about the shady side of BCCI for 18 months at least. 'What about all that money-laundering business in Miami?' he shouted back at me through the glass partition. 'People jailed, the lot. Don't tell me the Government didn't know about that!'

He was referring to BCCI's association with another collapsed institution, President Manuel Noriega of Panama. In January 1990, BCCI was fined \$15 million by a Florida court for its part in a massive drug money laundering job for the then Panamanian President. Six BCCI executives, including Noriega's personal banker, Amjad Awan, were subsequently jailed for the money-laundering offences.

Laundering – that is, the conversion of ill-gotten gains into some form of usable currency – is one of the older tricks of the financial world. But the modern term probably originated with gangster/entrepreneurs like Al Capone in the 1920s and 1930s, who set up laundry companies as fronts for

the money they received from drugs, gambling and prostitution.

Or are we being unfair to gangsters? In his account of a life of active citizenship, *A Man of Honour*, Joseph Bonanno – supposedly the figure on whom Mario Puzo's *Godfather* was based – spends pages repudiating claims put by the US Narcotics Strike Force that he 'wanted to purchase Cadillac dealerships in California to launder dirty money'. So detailed is his rebuttal of this outrageous slur, including pages on his own clever evasion of the Strike Force, that readers are left wondering at the missed business opportunities of such dealerships for one so acute.

High times

Equally acute – but a little less self-righteous – is Howard Marks, the Oxford graduate and socialite drug dealer currently serving 25 years in a Florida prison. In the late 1960s Marks had problems dealing with the profits of his burgeoning drug career. According to David Leigh's high spirited biography of Marks, *High Times*, 'Long-haired Notting Hill ex-students with no visible means of support were bad bets for avoiding police interest.' Marks decided to start a respectable small business. Financing a sewing partnership, Anna

Belinda Ltd, run by two dreamy women friends (yes, Anna and Belinda) he set about equipping and furnishing the business through non-existent companies and generating tremendous profits from the sale of non-existent dresses.

None of the straight participants in the business ever had any idea what it was really for – until years later, when things started to go wrong. But 'illegal' friends were told the stark truth by a delighted Marks. 'I'm making lots of money from dope and sticking it into Anna Belinda.'

A decade later Marks was one of the biggest marijuana dealers in Britain. Ownership of a Swiss bank account plus membership of the National Federation of the Self Employed brought him firmly under the sway of Thatcherism. 'Howard felt a successful small businessman's triumph, and the stirrings of something even deeper,' writes Leigh enigmatically.

But laundering remained an ever more tedious problem. Even the conspicuous feasting of his wedding party held soon after Thatcher's victory was part of the elaborate exercise of 'fronting'. Vintage champagne, unlimited caviar, swans sculpted in ice... less a form of celebration than yet another way to soak up large amounts of money.

Developments in the last decade of drug dealing make Marks now look positively small time. In a special 1990 International Financial Action Task Force report on money laundering it was suggested that sales of cocaine, heroin and cannabis amount to approximately \$122 billion per year in the United States and Europe.

Straight professionals

As much as \$85 billion a year of this could be available for laundering and investment. One Task Force member estimated global profits at the 'main dealer' level – the level most subject to international laundering – at about \$30 billion a year.

So how is laundering actually handled when such large amounts are at stake? Naturally, it requires the aid of those with a knowledge of the banking and legal system – lawyers or accountants or bankers – or those already in the business who are willing to put 'bad' money through. Not all middle-class professionals are as straight as the South Wales banker whom Howard Marks approached to launder 11 million Nigerian pounds. He had to be given a glass of water after the request was made, and was easily reassured by Marks that it had 'nothing to do with drugs'.

One way of laundering is to transport cash out of the country, put it into accounts and trusts in institutions with guaranteed secrecy. European countries like Switzerland and Luxembourg have long been renowned for the confidentiality of their banking systems – but secrecy laws have already been loosened following strong international criticism. Off-shore paradise islands like the Bahamas, Cayman Islands and Virgin Islands may experience fewer international pressures.

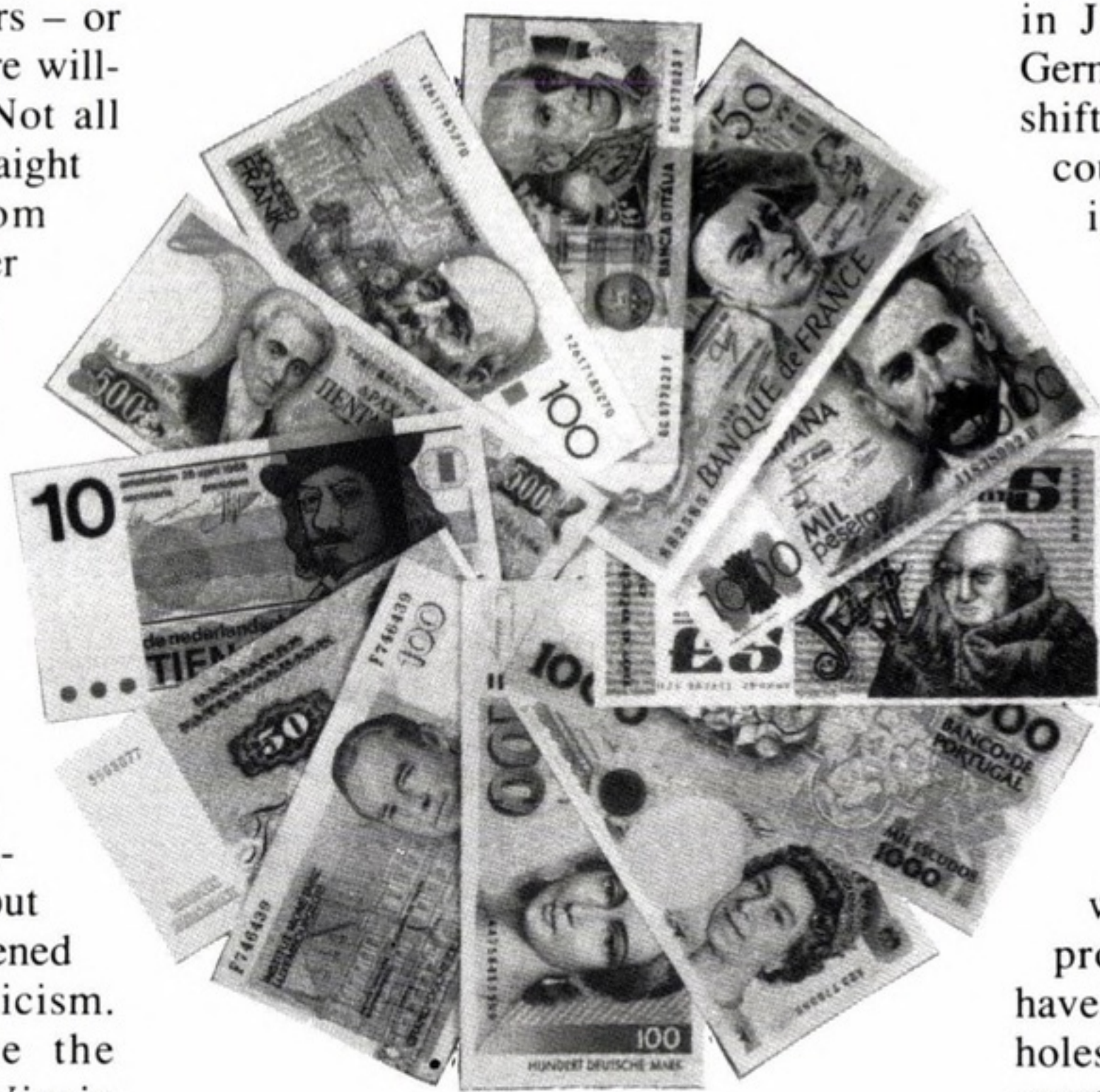
Transporting cash is not as easy as it may sound. Pablo Escobar, the Colombian drug dealer, supposedly lost \$400 million when it rotted away in the basement of a California house. He couldn't get it out of the country. Ramon Milan Rodriguez, one of Noriega's helpers, set up his own air freight company – Consolidated Air Services – complete with uniforms, a company logo and an executive jet, to move money from Miami to Panama. Tailor-made 'courier boxes' were constructed to hold differing quantities of cash. So impressive was the service, Rodriguez was asked to handle straight business – he refused.

Detailed records, found by the US authorities after the arrest of Rodriguez, showed that in the nine months between August 1982 and May 1983 his personal Lear Jet had made 47 flights from Miami to Panama, carrying \$151 million. The forty-

eighth flight never made it. Customs agents raided the plane – due to leave Fort Lauderdale International Airport on May 4 1983 – moments before take off. They found on board 20 boxes containing \$5,449,962.

Oscar Cuevas, another launderer, used Brinx's (the American security firm) to transfer boxes of cash from the US to London. Cuevas would then take the cash and pay it into London branches of American banks. From there it would be funnelled back into the US. At one point Cuevas was considering buying his own bank in Spain – always so much more useful to own your own financial institution.

But new initiatives on the part of the major industrial countries are now putting launderers worldwide under serious pres-



sure. The G7 Financial Action Task Force, comprising the seven leading industrial countries, including the US, Japan and Germany, recently made proposals to crack down on drug trafficking and 'laundering havens'. These include setting up a 'white list' of countries prepared to comply with international attempts to drive out launderers. According to one expert, sanctions against those countries not on the white list might include making it impossible to secure IMF loans or push through a financial deal with whitelisted countries.

Despite G7 rigour, a cat-and-mouse game seems to be developing in which laundering is squeezed out of one area, only to reappear in another. For instance, patterns of excess cash reserves in major US federal banks in the 1980s indicate an ever-shifting trail of 'dirty money' – from Miami in the late 1970s to Los Angeles in the mid-1980s. And according to recent reports from Federal authorities in Texas,

their banks are now being overloaded with unaccountable cash.

Take another example. All US banks must now report any deposit of more than \$10,000. This may be a more unworkable law for the regulators than for the launderers. Congressional hearings have already heard evidence of its avoidance through the labour-intensive technique of 'smurfing'. One (hooded) professional told the hearings that team leaders who co-ordinate a group of smurfers will go to a chosen city with hundreds of thousands in dollars. Each smurfer will then make a number of separate deposits, each at below the \$10,000 limit, at individual banks.

Launderers are also moving their money out of the newly regulated big banks into smaller institutions – exchange houses, cheque-cashing companies, and casinos. And in July this year, Chancellor Kohl of Germany warned that launderers were now shifting their terrain to the ex-communist countries. Dr Kohl told his cabinet that intelligence reports indicated profits from drug trading were being cleaned up and invested in East Germany. Hungary and Bulgaria, ever hungry for Western currency and with stringent bank secrecy laws, have also been named as possible targets.

Loopholes

The loopholes for drug money seem never ending, casting serious doubt on the ability of even the ever more technologically sophisticated national and international networks to take effective action. A key problem is this: legitimate businesses have long been abusing tax and legal loopholes to protect and increase their investments. So why shouldn't drug barons, so closely entwined with legitimate business and so closely mimicking them in money-making techniques, do the same?

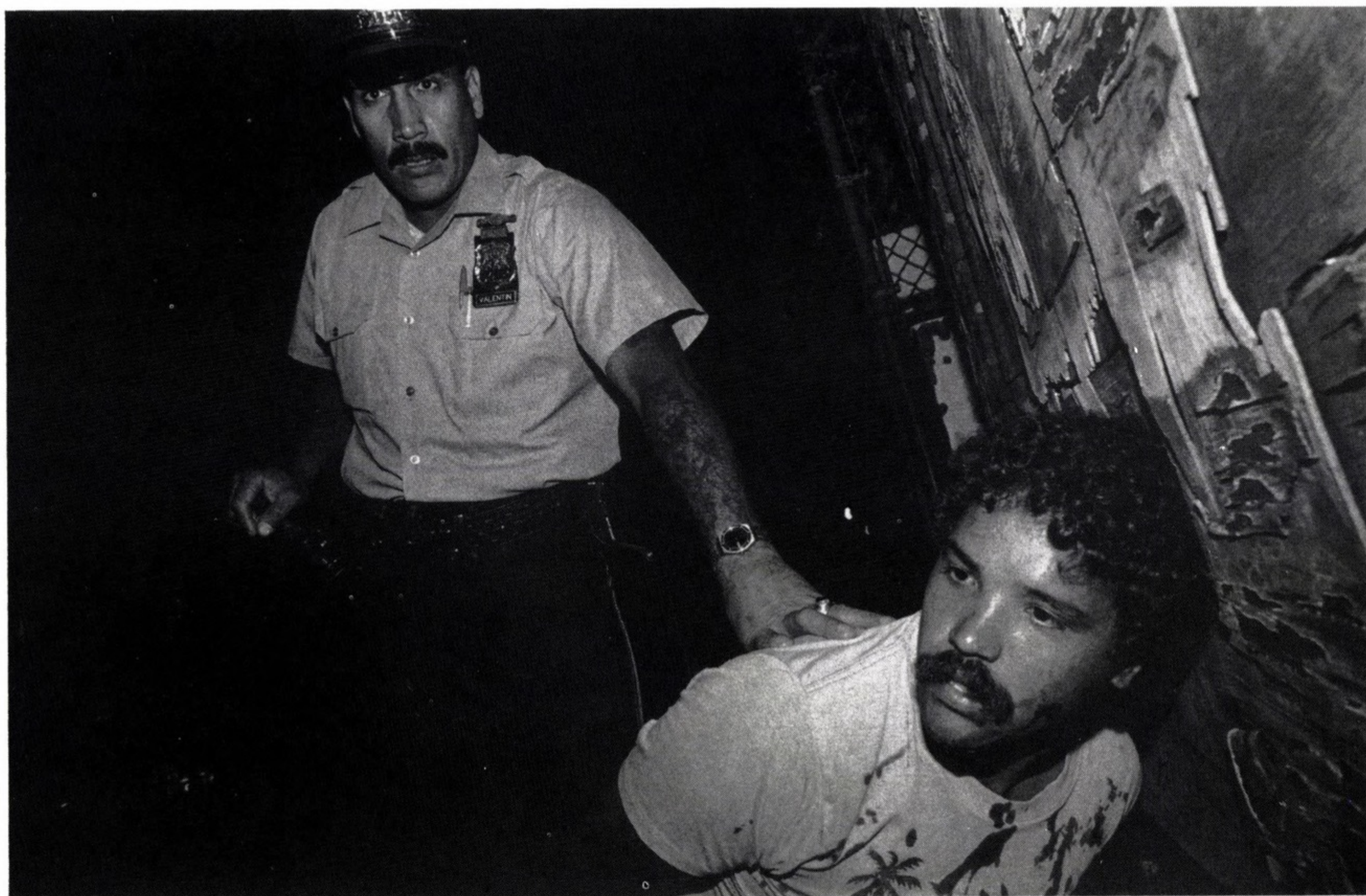
After all, what's good enough for Saatchi and Saatchi is good enough for anyone. Like Saatchis, Launderers Inc have increasingly turned to the art market to protect their investment. Since the 1987 stock-market crash, this has been one area where values have continued to rise. Employing completely legitimate dealers – and money from companies that are registered abroad, or secret bank accounts – the launderer is free to purchase fine works of art.

But should that exquisite Rembrandt be provoking just a bit too much Interpol attention, how about a vintage Bentley instead? With a spate of recent arrests of traffickers dealing in fine art and antiques, *Police Review* claims that classic cars are now the buoyant market... But then I expect my taxi driver knows about all that already. ■

Melissa Benn writes on UK social issues

SUSANNE SCHMUCK/VARIO-PRESS

EUGENE RICHARDS/MAGNUM



The Land of Oz. That's what police call North Philadelphia, where this man was caught with 15 bags of cocaine.

Shoot-out in downtown USA

Inner cities in America are being hit by the big stick – with no carrot on offer. Andrew Cohen explores the epicentre of the drugs business.

THE subways slow and the street lights dim. Any hope that Mayor Dinkins' administration could set a new, progressive agenda to fight New York City's deterioration has fallen victim to the cops-and-prisons demands of the war on drugs.

To close a \$3.5 billion gap in its \$28.7 billion budget, New York City will close walk-in clinics, drug-rehabilitation centres, homeless shelters, libraries and public pharmacies, lay off 10,000 workers and cut back services like lead-paint inspections, child immunization, AIDS pilot programmes and garbage recycling. But while the city may not be able to afford to keep its street lights on, it is budgeting \$1.2 billion to hire 5,000 new police officers and

to increase prison occupancy by 5,500. Governor Cuomo has built 27 new state prisons in the last eight years. 'If you're going to slash social services with one hand, you'd better carry a bigger stick in the other,' remarked one commentator.

The converse is also true. By transforming social problems into purely criminal issues the war on drugs has enabled the 'restructuring' of American cities to proceed apace. Crime crackdowns and service rollbacks go hand-in-hand in New York, Washington and Los Angeles.

New York's special narcotics prosecutor, Sterling Johnson, seized headlines on the eve of his retirement by telling the press: 'If this is a war on drugs, then the people of this city are the Kurds'. He want-

ed to protect his own budget – but his words had a resonance beyond his intention. The special prosecutor handles 7,200 felony cases a year and runs four grand juries, which hear about 30 cases a day; just between January and May of this year, 2,406 convictions were processed.

And yet, after all the martial rhetoric and the 'Safe Streets' promises, the main result of New York's war on drugs has been the imprisonment of a record number of African American men. They make up half the state's inmates, but less than 10 per cent of its population. While whites make up 30 per cent of arrests for sale and possession of drugs, they experience less than 10 per cent of all commitments to state prison for drug-related crimes – 90 per cent

of those in state prisons for drug-related crimes are Black.

Liberal alternatives to the law-and-order approach to drugs and youth violence are few and far between. They always seem to involve playgrounds. Anything more substantial, like drug treatment centres or youth employment programs, require more resources and imagination than New York can command.

New York's fiscal crisis is a crisis of priorities, mirrored all over the country as states square off with their budgets. But it figures in the media as a natural disaster, as

inevitable as George Bush's re-election. The city can't resort to deficit financing for political reasons. It would then incur the wrath of New York's Financial Control Board (the business watchdog) and more perilously, the possibility of its direct intervention. Democracy, such as it is, would be suspended, the Mayor effectively usurped and the austerity pill only made more bitter.

The city's commitment to 'economic restructuring' is a political move which has jeopardized its social priorities. The property-tax system remains grossly skewed in favor of wealthy homeowners. A proposal

for a tax on financial services was floated, but sunk by banking chiefs. They assured the city that Morgan Stanley, a finance house, would uproot its analysts and pack them off to a hotel in El Paso, Texas, if the Mayor so much as mentioned the idea a second time.

In the meantime, New York City developers enjoy a welfare program all their own – a billion dollars in commercial tax abatements. Typical awards go in 100-million-dollar chunks to hotels, office buildings and convention centres downtown, which fail to attract much occupancy.

Prisons, on the other hand, are full; the prison population has doubled since 1980 – though the crime rate has increased by only seven per cent. It continues to grow at a rate of 800 prisoners a week.

New York's deficit crisis is in part the result of larger political shifts, specifically the evaporation of federal funding. CBS correspondent William Geist suggested to the *New York Times* that the only way to save the city was to take the money to be spent 'subduing the next "Middle East madman" and give it to our 50,000 homeless people. Each would receive a ranch home (\$250,000), store credit at Barney's (\$10,000), college education (\$80,000), two cars (\$60,000), deluxe motor home (\$45,000), country club membership (\$25,000) plus golf lessons and a decent set of clubs (\$5,000), speedboat (\$25,000) and \$500,000 in cash.'

Geist could also have mentioned the six billion dollars a year going to Israel, or the cost of the Stealth bomber program, but the Federal Government seems to be taking its cues from the drug-war-torn cities. Two 'comprehensive anti-crime bills' are now before the Senate, one the Bush Administration's, the other sponsored by Senator Joseph Biden. It's difficult to say which of these is more dreadful.

Both are extraordinarily martial. Both authorize the death penalty for drug 'kingpins' and drug-related crimes, allow juveniles to be sentenced as adults and require drug tests from all federal prisoners on parole, probation and supervised release. The Biden bill, like Bush anti-crime bills before it, casts drugs as a criminal problem and devotes most of its allocations to law enforcement.

The streets of Los Angeles are now the epicentre of the war on drugs. In the mid-1980s, with the appearance of Crack cocaine and the militarization of federal narcotics enforcement in Miami and southern Florida, LA became the focal point for the overland trade route via Mexico. Rival gangs branched out into more than 100 groups. Martin Luther King Jr Hospital near Watts began to set annual records for the number of gunshot wounds it treated. Cash surpluses at the Federal

Poppyfields and penury

Tomatoes are no substitute for opium in northern Thailand. **Rob Stewart** talks to farmers about their fate.

THUM has been an opium addict for 32 years. Today he is a young-looking 50. He has a slight slur when he speaks and he rarely works in the fields. His wife Arphar worries about him, about their finances and what will become of their children. Thum weaves baskets to bring in extra money.

He lives in north Thailand but is of Chinese origin. He married into the village as a young man, at a time when money was scarce. He proved to be very useful to the community. His Chinese connections made it easier to sell the opium harvested every year.

The local dealer, Thum's cousin, would come to the village and negotiate targets and prices in early August, at planting time. The same man would return at harvest time in December and January to organize collection and transportation to Mae Sae on the Burmese border. From here it would be taken to refining laboratories which were under the protection of the government in Laos.

It was a profitable business for growers. Poppy fields bedecked the high slopes of the hills, which are often incredibly steep. Only a small acreage was required and opium could usually be rotated with a food crop like maize. No chemicals were needed to promote growth.

Then in 1984 the Thai army sent in troops to destroy the crops. Other villages had better contacts and were able to bribe them off. But after repeated destruction over the next two years the local farmers decided to plant alternative crops.

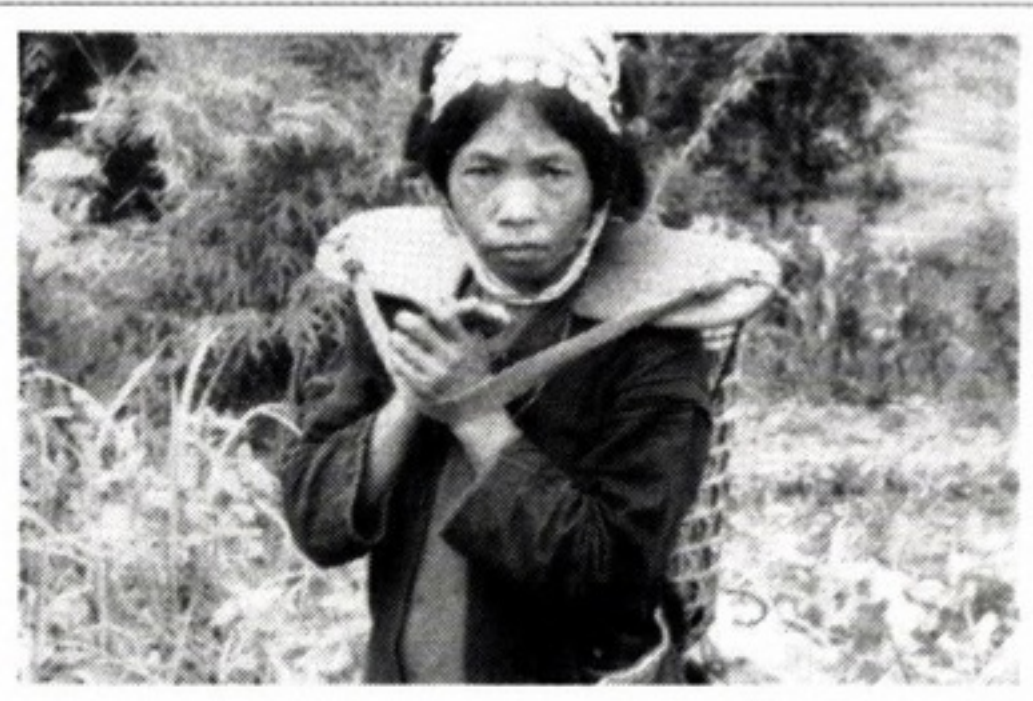
Tomatoes were chosen. Very quickly the hillsides were covered with them. Early in the season they fetched a good price. But as the season progressed the market became saturated, prices fell and growers were hard pressed to pay for the fertilizers and pesticides needed to ensure a reasonable harvest.

And so economic peonage has become a reality. Once-proud people are destitute, walking to the fields in dishevelled rags to work land they have been forced to sell to entrepreneurs. Social structures are being profoundly altered. Both men and women would negotiate opium prices, plant, harvest and be paid in the village. Now it is the men who drive the tomato crop to town, bargain and take the profits. Vital income is often drunk away – or spent on drugs.

Villages in the area have always had some

opium addicts. But the numbers were relatively few. Heroin addiction was limited to one or two cases. Khun Sa, the largest of the drug warlords, enforces a mandatory death penalty for drug abuse. Thum started smoking opium because of a stomach complaint. He only takes heroin if he is in pain. Thum's son is in his early 20s and much to his mother's consternation, has started playing with heroin too. Like many other young people he has to look after the tomato crop, guarding it (and the precious water supply) from theft. Sitting in the sun all day is boring and some turn to drugs to pass the time.

Increasingly, patches of opium poppies are being grown among the maize crops, so they cannot be seen by aerial reconnaissance. The



Women tend tomato fields; men take the cash.

families with opium addicts grow enough for their own consumption. Ironically, the refined product comes back to the village from Mae Sae at a much-inflated price.

The villagers are unwilling to speak about poppy cultivation. Suspicions about police informers are rife and any rumour could cause their village to be raided. Already this year there have been three raids and several arrests for possession. They have to pay ever-larger amounts in bribes to officials – reverting to poppies as a cash crop is one of the few means they have of finding the money.

Thum does not like to think about the future of his adopted people. Mixing the treacle-like raw opium with anadin, he rolls 10 round, black pellets. Heating them gently over a flame he lies down and drawing deeply on his pipe, sinks slowly into oblivion.

Rob Stewart is a freelance writer who covers South East Asia from Hong Kong

An iceberg in Brazil

A country that neither grows nor refines coca has become one of the world's biggest cocaine exporters. Jan Rocha peers into an underworld of political bosses, gangs and street children.

EUGENE RICHARDS/MAGNUM



Inner City on its knees; this man is forced to kneel while police search for the dealer who sold him drugs.

Reserve Bank branches in LA – one index of money-laundering activity – shot up from \$165 million in 1985 to \$3,800 million in 1988.

LA in the Reagan era suffered an industrial exodus which took with it thousands of union jobs. What Mike Davis calls the 'crypto-Keynesian employment program of the cocaine czars' filled the gap left by a 'conscious policy of social disinvestment' for LA's 78,000 unemployed youth.¹ It also saw the rebirth of the sweatshop, fuelled by sub-minimum wage non-citizen labour – which employers distinctly preferred. Displaced Black and Latino workers found they couldn't get service-sector jobs in LA's white suburban growth poles either. Three inner-city youth employment programs were dismantled while the city council channelled federal dollars into glitzy downtown projects. Faced with these bleak changes, and the dramatic rejuvenation of poverty they engendered, drug dealers or 'lookouts' could earn as much as \$750 a week in a 'rock house' and provide for their families.

Early in 1988, in response to neighborhood chaos, gang hype in the media and the black community's demands for equal police protection, LA Police Department (LAPD) Chief Gates launched the Gang Related Active Trafficker Suppression (GRATS) project. In February and March it conducted nine 300-police 'sweeps' which yielded 1,500 arrests and 500 impounded cars.

This war, like another that comes to mind, proved so popular that GRATIS became 'The Hammer', a high-profile series of '1,000-cop blitzkriegs' denounced by the local American Civil Liberties Union attorney as publicity stunts. By 1990 the LAPD and the Sheriffs had picked up some 50,000 Black and Latino youth sus-

pects. In some of the sweeps more than 90 per cent of these same suspects were released without charges.

'The Hammer' was an open invitation to a series of police riots. Police shot an unarmed teenager on the street and a retired 81-year-old construction worker in his home, which they'd mistaken for a 'Crack house'. The LAPD finally had to bring disciplinary and criminal action against 38 officers who participated in the infamous Dalton Street 'search' which destroyed an apartment complex and took 32 captive, discovering no drugs in the process.

In the same spirit, the state legislature has passed the Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (STEP), which made juvenile gang members' parents liable to prosecution. The class and race bias of the war on drugs is nowhere more evident than in these new penalties that STEP and subsequent federal legislation have imposed. Mike Davis records how 'Don Jackson, an off-duty Black policeman from Hawthorne, precisely in order to make a point about de facto apartheid, led some ghetto kids into [Westwood] Village. They carefully observed the law, yet, predictably, they were stopped, forced to kiss concrete and searched. Jackson, despite police identification, was arrested for "disturbing the peace".'

If this is 'peace', what kind of 'war' can we possibly be fighting? Instead of change it promises chestbeating, instead of aid it offers austerity. Perhaps Americans prefer to think that drugs are not a trade, only a transgression. Then crime, not social injustice, would be the problem. ■

Andrew Cohen works on *The Nation*, New York.

¹ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, Verso 1990.

UNTIL recently Brazilian police chiefs were remarkably complacent about the drug trade. In June Interpol chief Edson de Oliveira denied Brazil was becoming a major route. Asked about Rondônia, the western Amazon state where a senator was shot dead in a drugs-related assassination last year, he dismissed it as 'a regional problem'.

But a few days later a man punched a woman in the face and unwittingly revealed the tip of Brazil's cocaine iceberg. For the man was a congress member, Nobel Moura, and the woman he knocked down as she made a speech on the Congress floor was a fellow representative from Rondônia, Raquel Candido. Candido, a controversial figure herself, was accusing Moura and two other Rondônia congress members of illicit enrichment and involvement in the drug trade. Such unchivalrous behaviour not only earned Moura a month's suspension but attracted press attention to Rondônia. Stories about the drug trade began to appear.

But this was only the tip – the iceberg itself was revealed in July when São Paulo narcotics police intercepted a lorry carrying half a ton of high-grade cocaine just 20 miles outside the city. The cargo, destined for the port of Santos, was wrapped in brown paper packets each carrying a swastika design.

Even more startling than the size of the consignment was the identity of the two men who had gone to meet it – Nobias and Abidiel Rabelo, brothers of another Rondônia congress member, Jabes Rabelo. What is more, Abidiel carried a credential



Street children in Recife, north-eastern Brazil, where 500 children have been killed in five years, protest against death squads behind a banner they painted themselves.

identifying him as the parliamentary aide to his brother, giving him free access to Congress.

Jabes Rabelo immediately claimed that the credential was false and his signature was a forgery. A police handwriting expert claimed otherwise. A major federal police operation was launched in Rondônia to uncover the operations of the Rabelo brothers – Brazil's more modest version of the Colombian family drugs organizations.

The Rabelo family, like thousands of others, arrived penniless in Rondônia in the early 1970s. They worked as coffee porters, shoe shine boys, waiters, car salespeople. Now they are among the state's wealthiest men, owning executive jets, hotels, a construction company, a transport firm and cattle ranches.

Abidiel Rabelo planned to run for

mayor at the next election in Cacoal, the town of 80,000 where the family built up its wealth and power base. In the best tradition of the Colombian drug bosses he had begun to take on the role of public benefactor, distributing toys and food at festivals and financing public works. A Rabelo nominee was in charge of the traffic department charged with licensing new cars – in this case stolen ones.

Jabes Rabelo was about to transfer his political allegiance to President Fernando Collor when his brothers were arrested. In fact he was due to be welcomed with other Rondônia congress members by the President himself in a Palace ceremony that had to be hastily cancelled.

Rondônia has been a state for less than 10 years. Even so, it qualified immediately to elect eight congress members and three

senators. This is the result of a constitutional reform introduced by one of Brazil's General-Presidents during the 21-year military regime, which began after a coup in 1964. General Geisel got annoyed with Congress when it refused to vote the right way in 1977. Representation from the more backward north and north-eastern states was increased – that of the more politically advanced south was limited. More states were created out of former territories where dependence on federal funds ensured support in Congress. The result was that Jabes Rabelo could get elected with only 11,000 votes, while in São Paulo he would have needed 100,000.

The large cities like Rio and São Paulo not only provide airports, seaports and highway networks for the drug business but attractive consumer markets too. In Rio many hillside shantytowns have become no-go areas, ruled by drug bosses. Neglected by governments, residents' needs are met by the bosses in exchange for silence and loyalty. Chronic unemployment and poverty recruit a ready army of young boys for the drug gangs.

The existence of the gangs provides an easy excuse for many of the vigilante killings and extra-judicial murders denounced by organizations like Amnesty International and Americas Watch. Newspapers like *O Povo* in Rio ('You squeeze it, blood drips from it') offer readers a daily diet of last night's murders under headlines like 'Police execute two traffickers'. A half-page picture shows two boys shot down in a *favela*. But the text reveals that 14-year-old Anderson had nothing to do with drugs, while his 17-year-old friend smoked marijuana.

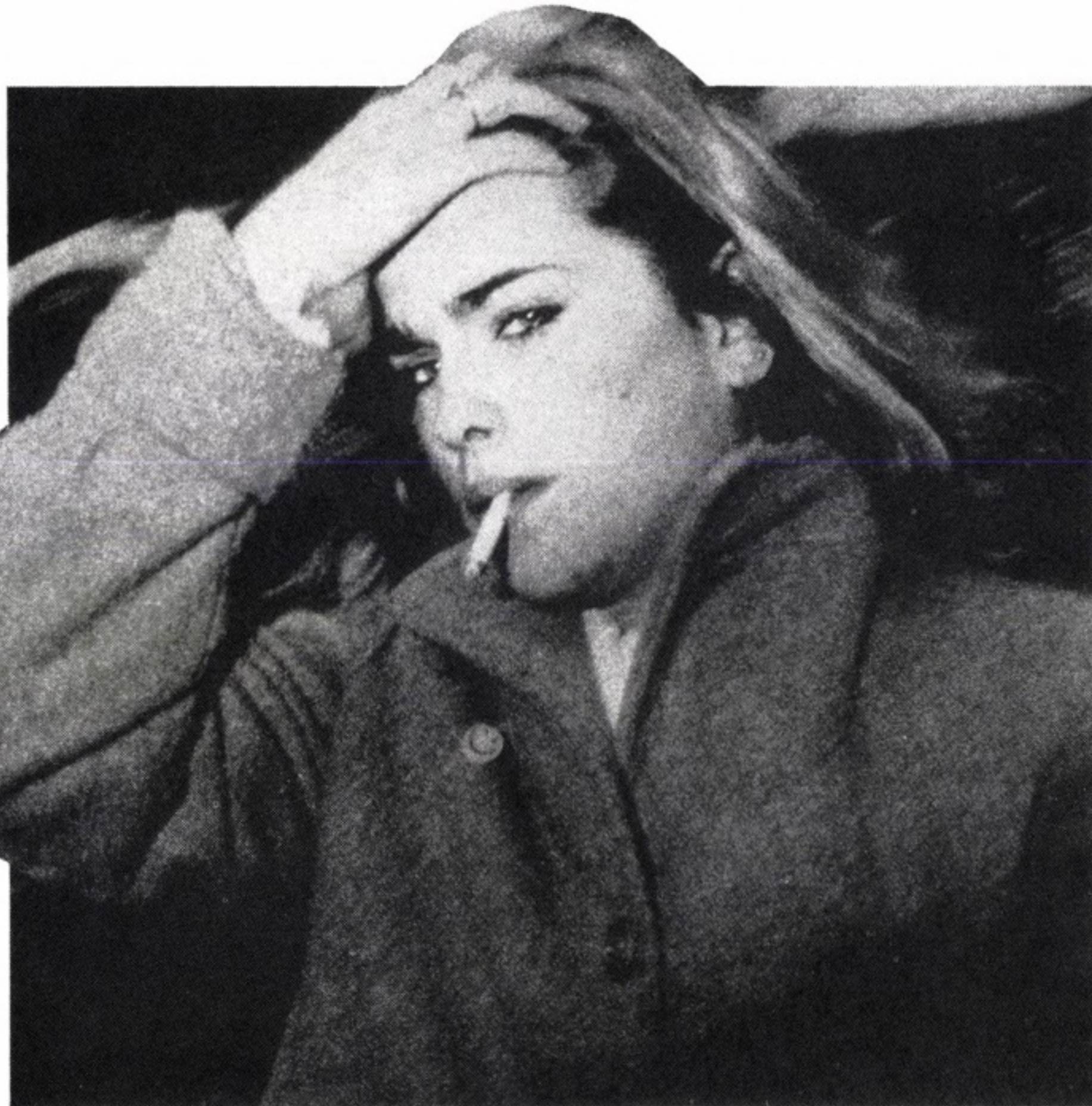
Among the most vulnerable are Brazil's seven to eight million street children. Public prosecutor Antonio Carlos Ramozzi, a member of São Paulo's state drugs council, says that 80 per cent of them use drugs. Shoemakers' glue is the most common. Ragged children sniffing glue from paper bags are now a common sight in every major city. The street children sniff to forget hunger and cold and their rejection by the society around them.

The drug trade in Brazil cannot be isolated as a police problem. It has to be seen in its political and social context – a fantastic concentration of wealth and land on the one hand and mass migrations of poor, landless people on the other. Austerity programmes that bring poverty and unemployment rather than health and education help to provide both consumers and producers of drugs. And it is no use saving the Amazon rainforest if the people who live there are ruled by drug bosses and consumed by Crack.

Jan Rocha lives in and writes from São Paulo, Brazil.

SIMPLY - What's the treatment?

There is no easy cure for a society hooked on illicit drugs. The NI takes you on a whirlwind tour round some of the solutions on offer.



■ COLD TURKEY

TOTAL WAR ON DRUGS

The 'war' has failed so far because it has been too soft. There should be no holds barred. The enemy is as much the drug user as the drug pusher and producer. There should be tougher penalties and laws on possession, including the seizure of property, unrestricted rights of entry to suspected premises, routine drug tests at the place of work and stricter law enforcement. The army should be used if necessary. The aim is a drug-free society. This means making the war an international priority as well. Measures to be taken should include armed intervention and the eradication of crops in producer countries. Full co-operation should be required from countries in the South as a precondition for aid, loans or trade deals.

SIDE EFFECTS:

- The illicit nature of drugs increases their appeal to the young
- Bigger risks mean bigger profits on the trade as well as more violent and efficient traffickers
- Further corruption of enforcement agencies and governments
- Other priorities, such as the eradication of poverty, continue to be neglected.

■ SOFTLY, SOFTLY

REDUCE HARM

The worldwide growth of HIV infection and AIDS has drawn attention to the part played by drug users in the spread of the virus – particularly the use of infected needles to inject heroin. Many medical professionals have made urgent appeals for sterile needles to be supplied freely to addicts. Reducing the harm from drugs for users, who are victims not criminals, is the priority. War is counter-productive because it promotes violence and inflates profits from the trade. Instead there should be treatment of addicts.

SIDE EFFECTS:

- Free needle exchanges condone drug use and possession, which remain illegal
- Reduced sentences send wrong messages to traffickers and potential users
- Resources for treatment are not available.



■ R E L A X

■ DECRIMINALIZE POSSESSION

Millions of people regularly break drug laws. So making it no longer a criminal offence to possess small quantities of drugs for personal use would put an end to police intrusion into personal lives and allow them to concentrate on serious crime instead. Drug supplies might be controlled through publicly-run outlets, taking private profit out of the traffic and impurities out of the drugs. And, by removing the war from its present status, more pressing issues of poverty and development could be tackled.

■ SIDE EFFECTS :

- The risk of increased consumption of potentially dangerous drugs
- A clear distinction between possession and trafficking is not easy to make
- The real dangers of, and distinctions between, different drugs might be inadequately recognised
- Impossible if political ideology is set against public spending on social problems.



■ CHOOSE YOUR POISON

■ LEGALIZE DRUGS

Two very different strands of opinion have now come together. Since the 1960s various 'legalize cannabis' groups have been arguing for the beneficial effects of taking marijuana and the usefulness of the hemp plant from which it derives. For some societies marijuana and other hallucinogenic drugs are a sacred part of their culture. The 'legalize cannabis' groups have now been joined by free-market libertarians who say that drugs are a commodity like any other. If consumers choose to use drugs it is up to them – private enterprise has the right to develop the drugs business too. State interference is wrong in principle.

■ SIDE EFFECTS :

- Drugs would be actively promoted by advertising
- Potential for increase in use and addiction, as has happened with tobacco and alcohol
- Small producers in poor countries put out of business by large plantations, as with tobacco, coffee etc
- Power and wealth of drug barons and traffickers is legitimized.



■ LEAVE WELL ALONE

■ LET THEM GET ON WITH IT

There's no shortage of hype about illicit drugs – the excitement, glamour and violence give the whole nasty business a breathless media attention it does not merit. Even if a minority in the rich world take them, and some peasant farmers from the poor world produce them, the majority of people are not involved. The publicity is a distraction. We should continue our pursuit of success, happiness or revolution – depending on our viewpoint – and refuse to be distracted. If addicts want to kill themselves, so be it. If politicians want to crusade against them, let them get on with it.

■ SIDE EFFECTS :

- Appeals only to those with no interest in how their tax money is spent
- Even if not you, then your relatives or friends could get involved, whether you like it or not
- Impossible to do if you live in most inner cities or many Third World countries
- Fails to address the needs of the Third World.



ILLUSTRATION : CLIVE OFFLEY



User

Your presence is hungry and highpitched,
the note of nails screeched down a blackboard
snatching the backbone in a fist of quills.
You hear it yourself and want to escape
frantic and headlong, a wasp in a jamjar.

Under the nightshade of a parasol,
light lacquered mauve and gold, you summon
friends in prison or overdosed and dead
without their lady of the lamp. You've lost
count of the times you've given the kiss of life;

still working as a local pool attendant,
weren't you once a lifeguard by the ocean?
Airmails come from the home you left behind you
but the past you can't put there — you trail it
like a swarm of hornets, a coiffure of fire.

Your dealers use the tradesman's entrance.
Then you wear a halo of candyfloss,
a glutinous helmet, lighter than air.
Coming down, you long to be forgiven and forget.
And the next morning crashes into you.

Jamie McKendrick

ACTION DIRECTORY

■ Useful addresses

AOTEAROA / NEW ZEALAND

Alcohol and Drug Centres are listed on the 'Hospital' page near the front of your 'phone directory. If you can't find a listing contact the **NZ Drug Foundation**, PO Box 3082, Wellington, tel: 04 499-2921 or contact your GP.

AUSTRALIA

Drug agencies work co-operatively by state. Here is a selection. **CEIDA (Centre for Education & Information on Drugs & Alcohol)**, Private Mail 6, PO Rozella, NSW 2039, tel: (02) 818 5222. **Alcohol & Drug Education**, GPO Box 520, South Melbourne, 3205, tel: (03) 690 6000, (counselling service) (03) 482 2711. **The Woolshed Drug Therapeutic Community**, Strathavon Road, Ashbourne, SA 5157, tel: 085 366 002.

CANADA

Addiction Research Foundation, 33 Russell Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S1, tel: (416) 595 6054 — research and information. **The Donwood Institute**, 175 Brentcliffe Road, Toronto, Ontario M4G 3Z1 tel: (416) 425 3930, renowned public hospital for treatment, with holistic approach. **La Ligue Anti-Prohibitioniste**, Ecole de Criminologie, Université de Montréal, CP 6128, Postal Station A, Nth PQ, H3C 3J7. Advocates drug policy alternatives in Canada.

UK

For information on drugs contact the **Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence (ISDD)** tel: (071) 430 1991, and on local services the **Standing Conference on Drug Abuse (SCODA)** tel: (071) 430 2341, both at 1 Hatton Place, London EC1N 8ND.

US

The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), 1636 R. St. NW, Washington, DC 20009 tel: (202) 483 5500. Publishes quarterly and monthly newsletters and has local chapters across the US. **The Drug Policy Foundation**, 4801 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20016-2087 tel: (202) 895 1634. Advocates alternative humane drug policies and publishes a newsletter. **High Times** — a monthly magazine dealing with drug-related issues in an entertaining and enlightened fashion. 211 E. 43rd St, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10017.

■ Worth reading on...

the war on drugs

For a shockingly detached insider's view of addiction there is nothing to compare with William Burroughs' **Naked Lunch** (Grove Press, paperback, 1966). By way of contrast read Bruce K Alexander, **Peaceful Measures: Canada's Way out of the 'War on Drugs'** (University of Toronto Press, 1990). If you find it hard to credit CIA complicity in the trade you won't after you've read **Cocaine Politics** (University of California Press, 1991) by Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall, and **The Politics of Heroin** (Lawrence Hill Books, 1991) by Alfred W McCoy. A sober assessment can be found in **Traffickers: Drug Markets and Law Enforcement** by Nicholas Dorn, Karin Murji and Nigel South, to be published by Routledge, October 1991. Mike Davis' **City of Quartz; Excavating the Future in Los Angeles** (Verso 1990) is essential reading on urban America after Reagan — a scarifying tale. You'll find most of the policy protagonists present in James A Inciardi, **The Drug Legalization Debate**, (Sage, 1991).

IVORY COAST

The world's largest church

In the 1950s Yamoussoukro was just a quiet village with about 500 residents. But as the birthplace of Ivory Coast's President-for-life Félix Houphouët-Boigny it has undergone a few changes over the years. It is now a glittering, if rather empty, metropolis which formally replaced Abidjan as the country's capital in 1983.

Yet even that was not enough – Yamoussoukro's crowning glory was to be its cathedral, slavishly modelled on St Peter's in Rome. It took 24 French and Italian companies and 1,500 African workmen just three years to realise the plans of Pierre Fakhoury, an Ivoirean architect of Lebanese descent. A golden cross now soars 168 metres above the savanna; the dome below is twice the height of Notre Dame in Paris and crowns a vast nave with 36 thirty-metre-high stained-glass windows. In 1990 the President gave the basilica to the Vatican and, amid growing civil unrest, Pope John-Paul rather uneasily consecrated it as the world's largest church.

Even with its current population of 100,000, Yamoussoukro is unlikely to supply enough church-going people to fill the cathedral's 7,000 air-conditioned seats or its standing room for 12,000 more, let alone the open-air piazza built to hold a congregation of 350,000 – which is greater than the number of Catholics in this mainly Muslim or animist country.

So it's difficult to justify the basilica of Notre Dame de la Paix. Some have tried, like the Ivoirean working on the basilica who asked 'When they built St Peter's, were there no hungry people in Rome? When Britain after the Great Fire built St Paul's, were there no poor and homeless in London?' But Ivoireans are more likely to ask how Houphouët-Boigny has amassed the vast personal fortune he has spent on the cathedral when so many Ivoireans are dying from disease, when immunization programmes are wilting for want of cash and when some of the worst malnutrition in West Africa affects the northern part of the country.

Source: *World Magazine*, No 51



**'I did a deal
with God and you
wouldn't expect me
to discuss God's
business in public,
would you?'**

**Félix Houphouët-Boigny,
President of the Ivory Coast, on his
funding of the \$150 million basilica.**

On the beach

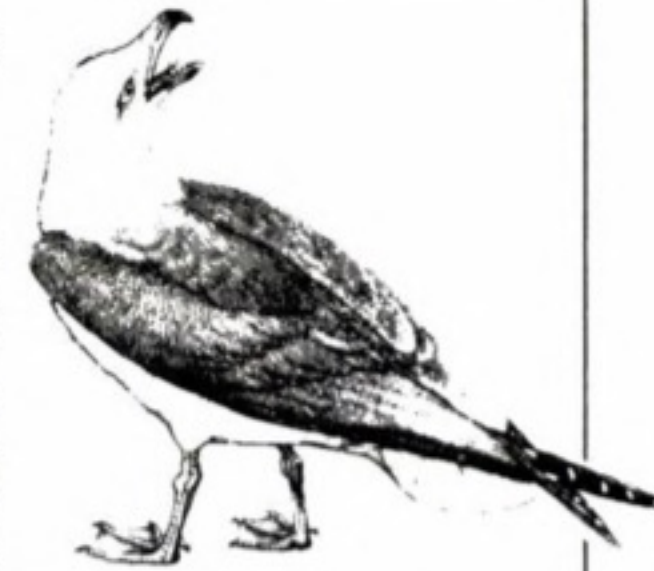
A recent letter to *Nature* details the findings of a zoologist who went for a mile-long stroll along the shore of Acadia, an island in the Ducie Atoll. It is uninhabited, with the nearest scarcely-inhabited place being the Pitcairn Islands, 293 miles away. It is thousands of miles to the nearest major landmass. But despite this isolation 953 manufactured objects were washed up.

The findings included: 179 buoys and fragments thereof, 171 glass bottles (over a third of them having once contained whiskey), 7 food and drink cans, 6 fluorescent light bulbs and 8 standard, 25 shoes, and an asthma inhaler. The asthma inhaler was empty but a canned meat pie was in one piece, albeit a bit soggy. There were also 268 miscellaneous pieces of plastic, including two Biro tops. All this does not say much for the state of the oceans or the tidiness of the ships that sail them. Is there a message in this flotsam and jetsam?



Walls of death

Driftnet fishing in the North Pacific, the 'walls of death' according to a recent report, are killing more than 500,000 seabirds a



year, as well as tens of thousands of dolphins, seals and porpoises. It is the most compelling evidence yet of the indiscriminate slaughter involved in driftnet fishing on the high seas. The figures, taken from fisheries officers on board Japanese ships, are estimated to represent barely five per cent of the overall driftnet catch in the region, where Korean and Taiwanese vessels also operate.

The information should help groups seeking the eventual outlawing of driftnetting in the North Pacific. And it might help those concerned about Japan's and Taiwan's eagerness to restart driftnetting in the South Pacific.

Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20.6.91

NATIVE PEOPLES

'Quebec libre' brouhaha

French secessionist moves contested in Canada

FOR centuries the French Quebecois have claimed independence for their province. But recently moves for more autonomy from Ottawa have sharpened. Now there's a new – or rather old – wrinkle to the picture. The province's 50,000 native people say they have a prior claim to most of Quebec's territory.

In the south the Mohawks say 75,000 square kilometres of land belong to them. In the north the Cree claim a land mass roughly the size of France. In total 85 per cent of Quebec is claimed by native groups, who reserve the right to decide for themselves whether to stay in Canada, leave with Quebec (if it does separate) or even break away from both.

But the Quebec Government is not likely to settle for what's left – the St Lawrence valley from Quebec City to Montréal. At stake are the rich natural resources of the North – important for the economy of an independent Quebec.

A major bone of contention will be the James Bay project, a vast hydro-electric power plant the province has been building since the 1970s. It lies on the territory claimed by the Cree. Law suits are pending in the Federal Court of Canada and the Quebec Superior Court. Native leaders promise that if Quebec separates boundary disputes will ensue.

In the middle of all this is the Federal Government, trying to keep the country from splintering apart. Following last summer's failed constitutional talks, Quebec is more determined than ever to obtain as much autonomy as possible – if not outright independence from Ottawa. Native groups, not only in Quebec but across Canada, are fighting for much the same goals.

These groups, however, have not even gotten to the bargaining table. One of their demands is representation and equal status, alongside the 10 provincial premiers, in any future constitutional negotiations. Ottawa is currently seeking native (as well as public) input into the constitutional debate, but that is all.

Despite these troubles, native leaders are confident their goals will be reached eventually. 'The dynamics of constitutional change will work in our favour,' says Ovide Mercredi, elected national chief of the Assembly of First Nations in June. If the French make gains in Quebec, 'it will be somewhat impossible not to have gains for aboriginal people... It would show a double standard that is contrary to the basic value of fairness in Canadian society.' ■

Nancy Clark



Gaza – turn of the screw

The realities of daily life in the Gaza Strip for nearly half a million Palestinians are grim. Before the outbreak of the *intifada*, some 80,000 Gaza residents worked in Israel. Yet by July 1991, Israel had reduced the number of work permits issued to people from Gaza to just 40,000.

To work in Israel, a Gaza Palestinian must have a red identity card, a special computerized card (similar in appearance to a credit card) and a special work permit. These work permits are given only to people who have paid all their taxes, telephone bills and municipal rates and have received special security clearance.

Gazans are not allowed to go to Israel in their private cars. Most of them travel by car or taxi to the Erez checkpoint at the northern end of the Gaza Strip and leave their vehicles there during the day, taking buses to their work destinations. And these are the lucky ones with jobs...

SOURCE: PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY, NO 130

Gulf War casualties

The recent war has wrought near-apocalyptic results upon the infrastructure of Iraq, which until January 1991 had been an urbanized and mechanized society. Now most means of modern life have been destroyed. For some time to come the country will be relegated to a pre-industrial age but with all the disabilities of a post-industrial dependency on an intensive use of energy and technology. Here are some immediate, cautious estimates of the Gulf War casualties:

IMMEDIATE FATALITIES

Military: 100,000-150,000 Iraqi dead, many more missing plus an unquantifiable number injured.

Civilian: 5,000-15,000 Iraqi dead but estimates are suspected as far too low.

POST-WAR FIGURES

- 30,000 refugees dead
- 4,000-16,000 other civilian dead
- Deaths from battle injuries unquantifiable but substantial due to lack of medical facilities
- 1.8 million refugees.

SOURCE: THE PACIFIST, VOL 29, NO 4 1991.

Uganda's plague

More than 1.5 million Ugandans out of the population of 17 million are now HIV positive. If the current trend continues, this will rise to seven million by the year 2010. It will mean that AIDS would claim more lives in Uganda than the 58 wars fought in sub-Saharan Africa over the last 200 years.

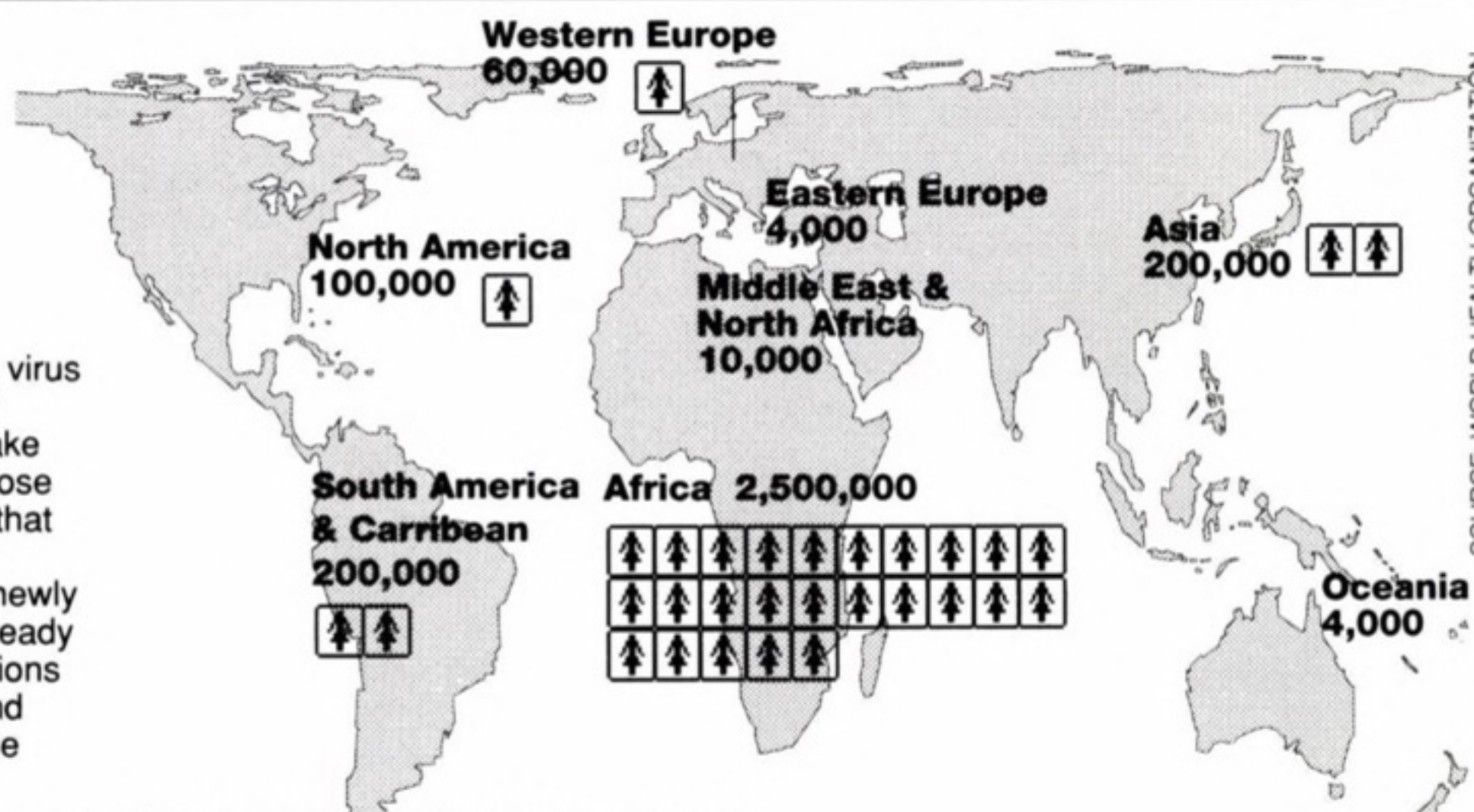
To control the spread of the disease, the United States Agency for International Development has given the largest ever country-specific grant – of \$12 million – to Ugandan non-governmental organizations. It will be used to expand the testing and counselling services outside Kampala, the capital city.

SOURCE: THE EXPERIMENT IN INTERNATIONAL LIVING

In Africa AIDS is spreading at an alarming rate. Already there are nearly six million African adults who have been infected by the human immune deficiency virus (HIV). Unlike other regions women make up nearly half of those infected, meaning that the disease is transmitted to the newly born. There are already 900,000 HIV infections amongst babies and small children of the continent.

Estimated numbers of HIV infected women

▲ = 100,000 women of childbearing age (15-49) who are HIV positive



SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

BOUGAINVILLE

Revolution

Hard times for rebels on blockaded island

RIMMED by the misty jungles of the Panguna mountains, Bougainville Copper Limited's mine stands silent under the beating sun. The silence is broken only by the sounds of soldiers from the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) making rifles from water pipes in the mine's workshops.

Bougainville, a lush tropical island, lies 700 kilometres north-east of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Its 160,000 black-skinned people are ethnically and culturally distinct from the people of PNG who governed Bougainville until a revolution last year.

Granted independence by Australia in 1975, PNG derived 17 per cent of government revenues and 45 per cent of its foreign exchange from the mine. Anger over compensation payments and pollution – which reduced cocoa crops and killed fish in local rivers – led to the formation of the BRA in 1988.

For six months the BRA attacked the mine until mining was stopped on 15 May 1989. Secessionist sentiments hardened when 1,600 PNG troops were sent to crush the BRA guerrillas. Frustrated by an elusive and popular enemy, the PNG troops burned down 1,000 houses. Rape, torture and murder became commonplace. In March 1990 Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu withdrew the discredited troops. Francis Ona, co-founder of the BRA, promptly declared Bougainville a Republic and himself its President. The next day, Namaliu cut Bougainville's telephone lines, withdrew all public servants and blockaded the island.

Shops are now empty. Petrol stations, the radio station, telephone exchange and airport were burned down during the war. Sewerage and town water systems lack fuel to run them. 'Plentiful rivers and good rainfall are a blessing,' says Martin Miriori, Co-ordinator of the Republic's Interim Government, 'but we lack the things that go with them: soap, detergent, toilet paper.' There has been no new clothing for the 5,000 babies born since the revolution, and islanders report that corpses have been exhumed to retrieve clothing. An immunization programme in one of the world's high-risk areas for contracting malaria, tuberculosis, tropical ulcers and dysentery is stalled for want of electricity to refrigerate ampules.

'A shortage of basic medicines is not our biggest problem – it's the lack of fuel,' says Charles Loubai, head of the Bougainville Red Cross and one of four doctors left on the island. He says 5,000 people have died from normally preventable diseases.

Recently Colonel Leo Nuia, who commanded PNG's troops during the year-long battle, admitted on Australian TV that his soldiers threw the bodies of five Bougainville civilians to the sharks from a helicopter on loan from the Australian Army and flown by a contract pilot from Aotearoa/New Zealand. The victims were a United Church pastor and members of his congregation who were suspected of being BRA members. The governments of Australia and Aotearoa are now sending in emergency medical supplies to the island, but Australia continues to supply military aid to PNG without strings. ■

Jim Beatson



JIM BEATSON

Jams, more jams, jammed-up

Bangkok's traffic jams are set to become worse as on 3 July, the Government reduced import duties on cars. Cheaper, more affordable cars will mean more on the roads. Until now the Thai car market has been protected so that second-hand cars tend to appreciate in value.

Import duties on cars over 2,300 cc which were 300 per cent have been cut to 100 per cent, on car kits assembled in Thailand from 112 per cent to 20 per cent.

This could be interesting for the capital. Last year 400 new cars and pickups a day joined the city's snarled-up streets. Over the year average traffic speed at peak hours has slowed from four miles an hour to two and a half miles an hour. School runs begin as early as 5.30 am – and some parents have converted their pick-ups into bedrooms so their children can sleep and eat breakfast on the way to school.

SOURCE: THE ECONOMIST, VOL 320 NO 7714, 1991

END

END Quote

An investigation into the Los Angeles Police Department has uncovered brutality and racism. White officers clubbed an unemployed black construction worker 56 times in the early hours of March 3. They had been videotaped by a bystander. Within days TV stations across the US were replaying the grisly images. An investigation established 23 police were at the scene of the clubbing. It also looked at communications by police between their patrol cars and here are some of the comments they noted between police officers over their car radios:

'A full moon and a full gun makes for a night of fun.'

'Did you arrest the 85-year-old lady (or) just beat her up?'
'We just slapped her a bit ... she's getting m/t (medical treatment) right now.'

'(It) was fun ... but no chance to bust heads ... sorry.'
'Oh well ... maybe next time.'

'I would love to drive down Slavson (a black neighbourhood) with a flame thrower ... We would have a barbecue.'



The Great Reversal: China's great collective works under threat.



books

The Great Reversal

by William Hinton (Monthly Review Press US; Earthscan UK)

William Hinton has been arguably the greatest single commentator on post-revolutionary China. This is not because he analyses the comings and goings at the top of the Beijing gerontocracy with more acuity than other observers but because he sees China's rulers and their policies as most ordinary Chinese people do: from the vantage-point of a small farming community far from the capital. In his classics *Fanshen* and *Shenfan* he wrote about the commune of Long Bow, giving a warts-and-all picture of how the Maoist Revolution of 1949 changed the lives of its people utterly and – we might once have thought – irrevocably. More than any other writer, he showed just how much the Maoist changes were needed.

For years he languished in the Cold War wilderness: the manuscript of *Fanshen* was confiscated by the US Customs and could not be published until 1966, long after the McCarthyite hysteria had subsided. Then, after Nixon made his overtures to Beijing, a pro-China position in the US became increasingly fashionable. After 1978, the West started praising Deng Xiaoping's market reforms to the skies and, as a consequence, Hinton found himself sliding back into 'glorious isolation.'

The Great Reversal, subtitled *The Privatization of China*, lays out Hinton's grounds for opposing the changes of the last 13 years. It is very different from his previous books in comprising a series of essays written over the whole period of the reforms. But there is a value to this. Instead of a seamless study of the country

written with post-Tiananmen hindsight, we get an evolving sense of the writer's dissatisfaction. First there is a brief sketch of Long Bow in 1978, as yet unwashed by the revisionist tides. Then we catch him in 1983, sceptical but open-minded on a visit to a county regarded by reformist ministers as a model. Only after that does his anger at the destruction of all that the Revolution had built up start to gather momentum.

The initial leap in rice production following rural privatization was illusory... As communes have been dismantled, so all the infrastructure and the chance to mechanize have withered on the vine... Encouraged to get rich, ordinary people have ransacked and devastated the environment in a frantic scramble for short-term profit... Corruption has

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become a byword, and the Deng Xiaoping clique in Beijing has become a modern equivalent of the Chiang Kaishek ruling group which Mao originally overthrew – the Tiananmen Massacre (which Hinton witnessed) was simply the most glaring sign of that.

We have become used to socialist countries embracing the free market; become used, even, to thinking that they are probably right to do so. William Hinton has nothing but scorn for that point of view and his analysis of why China cannot take the capitalist road is both penetrating and convincing. *The Great Reversal* is not a documentary classic like *Fanshen*. But at a time when socialist ideas and traditions are routinely discredited, it makes for just as essential reading.

Politics ★★★★★

Entertainment ★★☆☆

1 *Fanshen* was reviewed as a classic in NI Issue 195.



films

Uranus

directed by Claude Berri

The moral ambiguities of collaboration in wartime France were rarely studied with such detached conviction as in Louis Malle's *Lacombe Lucien*. Similarly, the contradictions of the purge of collaborators which followed Liberation are examined in Christian de Chalonge's forthcoming *Docteur Petiot*, the true story of a serial killer who thrived in Occupied Paris and, briefly at least, turned the aftermath of war to his advantage. Based on a novel by Marcel Aymé, who himself wrote for the pro-Vichy press, Claude Berri's new film *Uranus* attempts a similar dissection of the war-torn French psyche.

Set in a small French town in 1945, *Uranus* follows the fortunes of a diverse set of characters, waging their own petty rivalries and wars of attrition amidst the debris of social reconstruction. The Archambaud family, liberal Christians, share their apartment with Watrin (Philippe Noiret), a beatific humanist teacher, and the family of Gaigneux (Michel Blanc), a communist. As the Communist Party takes the ascendancy in town affairs, there are only too many people willing to exploit the social divisions. The spark that finally sets off the town's volatile energies is the arrival of Maxime Loin, a collaborating journalist.

The film's moral proposition is a little too schematic and banal to convince – suppose the Communists weren't all heroic and suppose the reviled Loin turned out to be essentially decent? Berri simply lacks the finesse to make anything interesting out of it. He's aiming for something as grandly operatic as

Delusions of poetic grandeur – Gérard Depardieu in *Uranus*.



his *Jean de Florette* diptych more or less managed to be.

But in the generally stodgy conception of the whole, the historical analysis loses out to a succession of various showy star turns – and only Gérard Depardieu's typically ebullient performance as a barkeeper with delusions of poetic grandeur is worth the effort. In the end, *Uranus* has little to say other than 'Isn't war terrible, and aren't people odd?' and says it with the minimum of eloquence.

Politics ★★☆☆

Entertainment ★☆☆☆



music

Voices of the Rainforest

(Rykodisc)

Txai

by Milton Nascimento (Columbia)

The sounds of the rainforest in the comfort of your own living room? There could hardly be a more Californian idea, and sure enough *Voices of the Rainforest* is released under the auspices of Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart's production company. Recorded by Steven Feld in Basavi, Papua New Guinea, the CD collects the sounds of birds, crickets, frogs and weather, together with the chants of the Kaluli people.

Feld's sleevenotes point out the Kaluli's sense of themselves as 'voices in the forest' and indeed the continuous backdrop of natural sounds meshes flawlessly with the work songs which accompany their tree cutting and sago making.

But the effect of gathering it together on CD is bizarre in the extreme – in a sense, this is the ultimate New Age soundtrack for



Dewy-eyed: Milton Nascimento.

jaded urbanites. Serious as Feld's intent is, and no matter how emphatically his notes stress the Kaluli's endangered situation, the recordings lend themselves only too easily to providing a vicarious frisson – simply programme the birdsong and you have instant wallpaper for your Papuan cocktail party.

Politics ☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆

The latest record by Brazilian singer Milton Nascimento may have its soppy moments but it successfully avoids the cocktail trap. Nascimento intersperses his own lavishly-orchestrated ballads with recordings of tribes from the Amapá, Pará and Rondônia states of Brazil. The recordings followed in the wake of Nascimento's journey up the Juruá river (the route followed by the NI's own David Ransom) and the mixing of his songs with those of the Yanomami, Kayapo and other peoples underpins the LP's basic humanitarian message (its title is a Kaxinawa word, roughly meaning 'companion').

Nascimento's slightly dewy-eyed humanism is backed up by his long-standing commitment to the cause of rainforest preservation, and the sleeve notes document his involvement with Brazil's Union of the Indigenous Nations and the National Council of Rubber Tappers, and their proposals for environmentally constructive extraction programmes. The music itself may be patchy, occasionally verging on the glutinous, but there are some powerful moments, and **Txai** is anything but a vicarious travelogue.

Politics ☆☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆

STAR RATING

Excellent ☆☆☆☆
Very good ☆☆☆
Good ☆☆☆
Fair ☆☆☆
Poor ☆

Reviews editor: Chris Brazier

THE classic

Maids and Madams

...being the book that showed women a world apart

WHEN the white South African lecturer Dr Jacklyn Cock was interviewing white employers in the Eastern Cape on their treatment of servants, she managed to elicit some extraordinary confidences: 'I don't have any (breakages). I've worked out a way of coping with that. The first time she chips a plate or a cup I call her out to the *stoep* (verandah). I take that plate or cup and tell her to watch. I then drop it on the cement floor so it smashes. Then I deduct the cost from her pay... You have to do it. Otherwise they chip things on purpose because then they think you will give it to them. You only have to do it once.'

How far does this book get under the skin of apartheid and its multiple oppressions of black workers in South Africa? A very long way indeed suggests the aftermath: after the book's first publication in 1980, Jacklyn Cock received a series of menacing phone calls. One night she was sitting over a late supper with friends when a huge pack of lighted dynamite was hurled through the window, fortunately failing to explode. 'If I had known the anger my research would provoke,' comments Dr Cock in a revised edition, 'I doubt very much that I would have found the courage to complete it.'

As a pupil at Swaneng Hill School in Botswana in the early 1970s where Jacklyn Cock was my Development Studies teacher, I never understood the everyday details of oppression that lay behind the burning sense of anger, humiliation and frustration felt by African classmates returning from visits to relatives in South Africa. As this book shows, understanding the broad cruelties of apartheid is not the same as getting right inside the day-to-day pattern of deprivation and humiliation.

What is the worst part of the job for a domestic worker in South Africa, who will generally work an exhaustingly long week for less than \$20 a month? In interviews with Dr Cock's black field worker, herself a part-time domestic, the answers varied: 'Cooking the dog's food and not eating it'; 'Not being allowed to sit in the kitchen. We have to sit outside next to the toilet and it smells worse than hell'; 'I never sleep at home with my husband and children. Even if I have a half day off I have to come back and sleep here at night'.

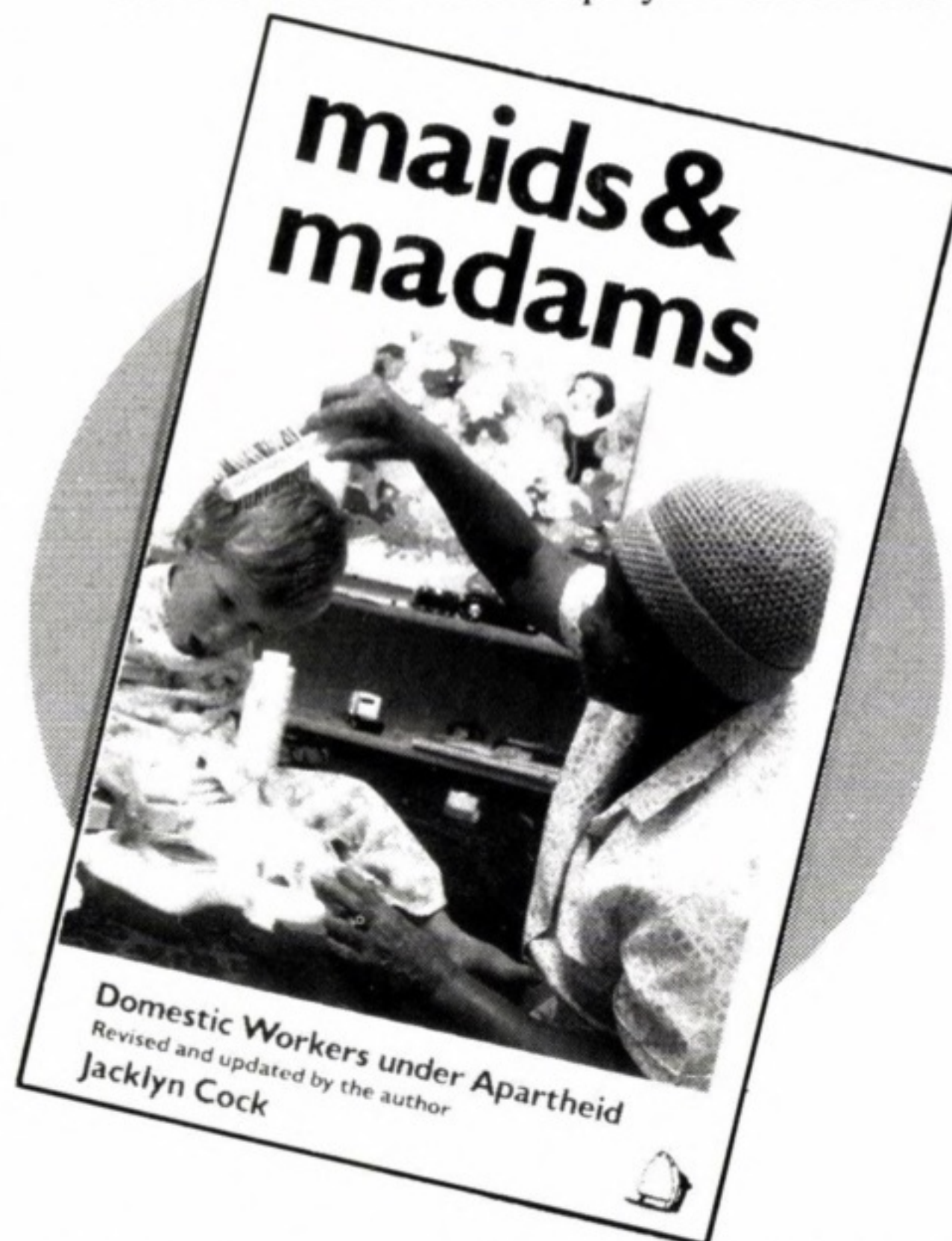
In their spartan servants' quarters, usually without access to a bathroom or hot water, the women's responses when asked what they would most like to add to the room illustrate the meagerness of their existence at the back door of South Africa's wealth: 'Blankets'; 'A chair'; 'A table to put my plate on when I eat'.

But the other concern of the book is equally fascinating: the interviews with the madams, who refused to talk when Jacklyn Cock said she was 'investigating the situation of domestic servants'

but happily participated in 'a study on the position of women and the organization of the home'.

It seems that white employers routinely reassure themselves that black servants are well treated – and that there is anyway such a difference between white and black that the servants get far more than they deserve. The responses are generally smug: 'In Rhodesia a "boy" does three times the work these do'; 'They are very mentally inferior. They don't think like us... you only get the odd one with a bit of intelligence'; 'Until they lift themselves up we can't love them. There's so much disease and ugliness...'; 'They don't think and feel like we do'. Far from being limited to South Africa, those processes of self-justification and distancing have been the foundations of oppression everywhere.

Yet even in the white employers' testimonies



there is some acknowledgement that black workers are treated unfairly; there are glimmerings of awareness that the system is oppressive. Rather more surprisingly, Jacklyn Cock also concludes that these white women are more unquestioningly subordinate in society than are the black 'girls' they have such power over.

Maids and Madams ends up being surprisingly optimistic. Charting the growth of women's unions as well as their consciousness, Cock concludes: 'I have tried to emphasize the extraordinary strengths black women have developed within this oppressive structure which bear witness to their power to endure, to survive and nurture life amidst the violence and social disintegration of contemporary South Africa... Their strengths should inspire all people's struggle for equality and freedom everywhere.'

Carol Fewster

Maids and Madams by Jacklyn Cock. First published by Ravan Press in South Africa, 1980. Revised UK edition from The Women's Press.



QUESTIONS

...THAT HAVE ALWAYS INTRIGUED YOU ABOUT THE WORLD WILL APPEAR IN THIS, YOUR SECTION, AND BE ANSWERED BY OTHER READERS. PLEASE ADDRESS YOUR ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS TO 'CURIOSITIES'.

Which of the world's religions is the most anti-sex? And which is most in favour?

● The Manichean Christians probably win hands down on the anti-sex stakes. They regarded *all* sex as polluting, sinful and inferior. Augustine of Hippo, a Manichean theologian of the fifth century AD, was famous for his proclamations of the evil of the flesh. He might more appropriately be remembered as 'Augustine of the Hypocrites' for his preachings did not get in the way of his 15-year-long sexual liaison with a woman.

Buddhism also has a strong ascetic and anti-sexual streak. So sickened was Gautama, the Buddha, by the immodest postures of his female and male servants that one night he abandoned his wife and family home and became a wandering ascetic.

Most religions do have a place for sex – some more than others. Muslims, for example, are unperturbed by the image of Muhammad as a sensual man with 14 wives. Hinduism has perhaps the widest range of views – from ascetic denial to a full, sensuous



Embracing erotic delight: the Hindu deity Shiva.

appreciation of erotic delight as something vital, sacred even. The most positive view of less conventional sexuality is probably held by Confucianism. Both female and male homosexuality flourished in Confucian China during the Middle Ages and was common and tolerated well into the nineteenth century.

On the other hand the Christian tradition is rather embarrassed about the whole sexual thing. It makes much of the virginity of Mary and the celibacy of Christ, with the Roman Catholics insisting on celibacy for their religious officials too. □

Dick Johnson, Reading, UK.

What is a dong bang?

● The *dong* is the currency of Vietnam. As to *dong bang* I can only assume that is it some form of economic measure. An austerity package, perhaps? Or perhaps not... Do any other readers have suggestions? □

P Miles, Bristol, UK

Which Third World countries have dollars as their unit of currency – and why?

● The dollar is used in Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Fiji, Guyana, Jamaica, Liberia, Malaysia, Brunei, Zimbabwe, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago. The word dollar originates from the Dutch *thaler* which went to New Amsterdam (New York) and other colonies via settlers from the Netherlands. It became widely used due to the power of first Dutch – and then US – imperialism. □

Bruce Winter, Glasgow, UK

How did the 'Shining Path' get its name?

● The full name of the Shining Path – *Sendero Luminoso* in Spanish – is a bit of mouthful. It's the 'Communist Party of Peru for the Shining Path of José Carlos

Mariategui'. It was first coined by the guerrilla organisation's founder and leader, a philosophy teacher called Abimael Guzman who drew inspiration from Mao Zedong and the



Armchair revolutionary: José Carlos Mariategui.

1920s Peruvian political theorist José Carlos Mariategui. It was Mariategui who identified Peru as a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society – and Guzman who dogmatically applied this analysis to the Peru of the 1970s and 1980s. The Andean Maoism of the Shining Path holds that the peasantry is the primary motive force of revolutionary change. □

Sue Simmonds, Oxford, UK

QUESTIONS awaiting your answers:

What are the origins of the Intifada?

What is the only type of fruit you are not allowed to carry on public transport in Thailand – and why?

Does anyone know what the 'Football War' was all about?

Why has Ougadougou become the film centre of Africa?

Can anyone explain why the British National Front promotes Colonel Gaddafi's *Little Green Book*?

Why do they wear bowler hats in Bolivia?

big Bad World

R.P. POLYP ANDY W

**HIGH
INTEREST
VULTURES**

AID

AMERICAN-INDUCED-UNDER-DEVELOPMENT

KILLS

**PROTECT
YOURSELF
JUST
SAY NO**

The power to say whoa!

Petra Kelly spots a new plan that could seriously shake the hypocrites in Western corridors of power – and save countless lives.

FOR eight intense years – up until 1990 – I sat through meetings of the prestigious and top secret Foreign Relations Committee of the German Parliament.

The first thing I learned was that Western European and North American double standards on human rights are much, much worse than I had ever imagined.

Every day thousands of people across the world are imprisoned, tortured or killed by governments seeking to repress or control them. For me there was never any question that human rights and the development of a green, non-violent, non-aligned foreign policy had to be a priority.

But when I began drawing attention to such taboo subjects as the 'holocaust' on the roof of the world – Tibet – or to the US-backed massacres in Timor, I encountered growing opposition from the German Government's Foreign Affairs Department. They tried to curb my initiatives in Parliament and even pleaded with me to drop certain resolutions which were certain to get through.

The messages I received were contradictory to say the least. On the one hand the German Government would solemnly declare – in every human rights debate – that the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states could *not* be used to reject demands to respect human rights. In fact, the German Foreign Ministry pronounced that no state should reject as 'interference' any criticism of its 'behaviour with regard to the realization of human rights'.

But in actual practice the German Government – like that of many other Western nations – is ruled by expediency and strategic economic interests rather than moral standards. For example, the massacres of Tibetans in Lhasa and of Chinese students in Tiananmen Square – just two years ago – have been conveniently forgotten in favour of a pro-China trade policy. And when China protests that foreign criticism of its human-rights record amounts to meddling in its internal affairs, Western politicians listen. 'One doesn't want to anger China', is a common whisper among German officials.

The reluctance to criticize China is even greater since the Gulf War when China chose not to exert its veto in the United Nations Security Council. This enabled the US and its allies to mobilize forces against Iraq with UN approval.

But a small – and in my opinion extremely important – step in the right direction is currently being made. Austria is tabling a motion at the United Nations General Assembly that would permit the UN to intervene in countries where human rights are being seriously violated.

This initiative deserves support. If accepted it will mean that

governments will no longer be able to dismiss calls for action over human rights issues by claiming that they cannot interfere. Millions of oppressed people around the world would benefit.

Calls for change have been increasingly urgent in recent months. Encouraged by the UN intervention on behalf of the Kurdish people, many other oppressed groups such as the Tibetans and the East Timorese are hoping for similar support from the outside.

It would be a radical departure from the UN's shameful performance of the past – most dramatically demonstrated by its silence during Pol Pot's massacre of millions in Cambodia followed by its acceptance of Pol Pot's associates as representatives at the UN.

Quite rightly a moral responsibility is assigned to the United Nations to prevent totalitarian regimes from committing genocide. This initiative from Austria – a neutral country – could help put that moral responsibility into practice and prompt other important changes.

And the most urgent change needed at the UN today is to restructure the Security Council and to do away with the exclusive veto powers of its five permanent members – the US, USSR, China, Britain and France.

The Security Council is the real decision-making body within the international community and the major powers' right to veto establishes a dual class of states, giving even greater power to the stronger nations. This violates the principle of equal rights and the very spirit of the UN Charter. The dilemma will not be resolved by merely expanding the Security Council to include nations such as Japan and Germany as this would simply increase the predominance of the major industrial powers.

For the UN to regain any of the credibility it once had, it must free itself from the constraints imposed by the major powers. International law must no longer be twisted and turned by those with the skill and power to do so. And the debate about intervention in the affairs of states that commit serious human-rights abuse is long overdue in our

shrinking world – in our global village. Human-rights abuses can no longer be regarded as a matter for the perpetrators and their victims but as crimes which concern the international community as a whole. This means that priority must be given to enforcing human-rights principles both in our domestic and foreign policy.

While sheer power, military might and daily violation of human rights are still the forces around which the system of international relations revolves, we in the alternative movements across the globe must not be silent. Silence is betrayal of those who are suffering! ■



Petra Kelly: mistress of the awkward question.

Petra Kelly was until last year a Green member of parliament in the German Bundestag. Her latest book is *The Anguish of Tibet* (Parallax Press, 1991).

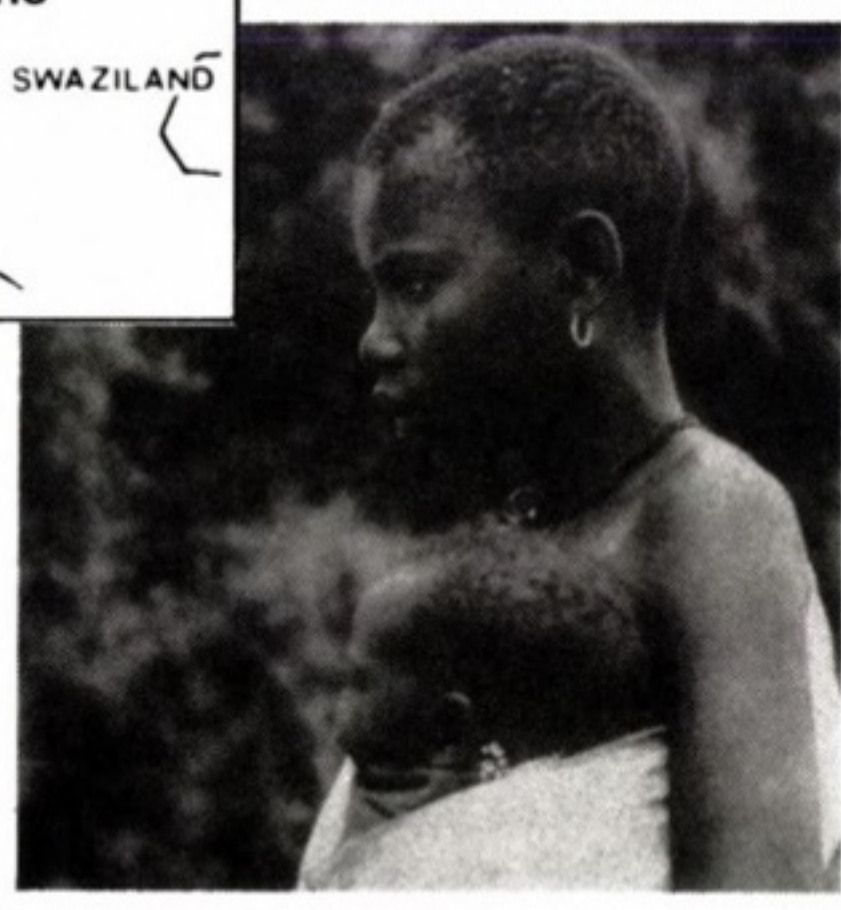
Botswana

AFRICA seems bedevilled with economic stagnation, political strife and poor levels of health care and literacy. But Botswana presents a different picture, coming a long way since independence in 1966 when it was one of the world's poorest countries.

Then it seemed it was a poor country with a wealth of attractions for (Western) visitors, from the Kalahari desert to the lush vegetation and wildlife in the swamps of the Okavango Delta whose delicate ecological balance fascinates conservationists.

But while these spots remain relatively unchanged, the pace of the whole country has altered. A visitor going to Gaborone, Botswana's capital, cannot fail to notice this is one sub-Saharan country that is prospering. The sound of drills and sight of new glass buildings, schools and clinics are apparent everywhere in a town which is growing daily.

The prosperity lies not only in the new buildings. Strong emphasis on social development, particularly in education and health, has pushed up standards the length and breadth of the country – especially for women. Some 80 per cent of the population are now within 15 kilometers of a health facility,



and infant mortality rates (a key indicator of development) are amongst the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa.

But it has been the towns and the formal sector that have benefitted most from the increased wealth. For the three-quarters of the population living in the countryside farming and

rearing livestock, incomes are meagre.

Yet despite the discrepancies of wealth, links between town and country are strong. Most households have traditionally maintained several homes: one in the village for social and civic purposes; one at the 'lands' or farms; and a further

one at the cattle post. People shuttle between these locations. In recent years, for those who can afford it, a house in town has been added to the bases. But the migration into towns has pushed up prices and rents, reflecting the 'boomtown' atmosphere.

The urban drift has made things difficult for many women in rural areas. As men go to the towns, traditional family networks break down. Many women, particularly single mothers, are unable to survive in the countryside without that support. Arable farming needs labour (which they can provide), but also cattle for ploughing – and the cattle belong to the men. So women also drift to the cities and end up as squatters, as tenants in rooms or if they are lucky as small plot-holders.

Even the Okavango Delta has not been sidestepped by the march of change. A proposal to drain some of its water for industrial use was heatedly debated before being thrown out. For the time being the Delta is safe. The hope is that Botswana's political stability will endure and achieve a balance for its people that mirrors nature's harmony in the Delta.

Gwenda Brophy

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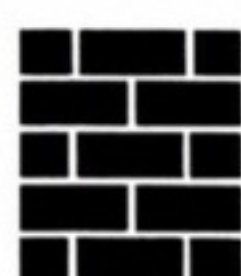
AT A glance

Excellent ★★★★★
Good ★★★★
Fair ★★★
Poor ★★
Appalling ★



INCOME DISTRIBUTION ★★★
 Improving but still wide disparity.

1987: ★



SELF-RELIANCE ★★★★★
 But dependent on the price of diamonds.

1987: ★★



POSITION OF WOMEN ★★★
 Many traditional attitudes still need to change.

1987: ★★



POLITICS
 The Botswana Democratic Party in power since Independence



1987



LITERACY ★★★★★
 70% Improving; education prioritized.

1987: ★★



FREEDOM ★★★★★
 One of the few multi-party democracies in Africa.

1987: ★★★★★



LIFE EXPECTANCY ★★★
 58 years; relatively high for sub-Saharan Africa. (US 76 years).

1987: ★★★

Leader President Dr Quett Kimule Joni Masire
Economy GNP per capita \$1,010 (US \$19,840)
Main exports: Diamonds, beef. Since independence in 1966 the country has exploited its mineral wealth. The mining sector has become dominant; the country is the world's largest exporter of diamonds in terms of value and the third by volume. The economy has been growing at around 10 per cent per annum over the last two decades, and has been the fastest growing economy in the world over the last decade.
Main imports: Petroleum, capital goods, machinery.
People 1.3 million
Health Infant mortality 58 per 1,000 live births (US 10 per 1,000)
Culture Semi-nomadic people; much of the population moves between village, cattle post, and lands.
Languages: Setswana, English
Religion: Traditional, and some Christianity.

Sources: Population Reference Data Sheet, 1990, Population Bureau; World Bank Report 1990; State of the World's Children 1991; State of World Population 1991.

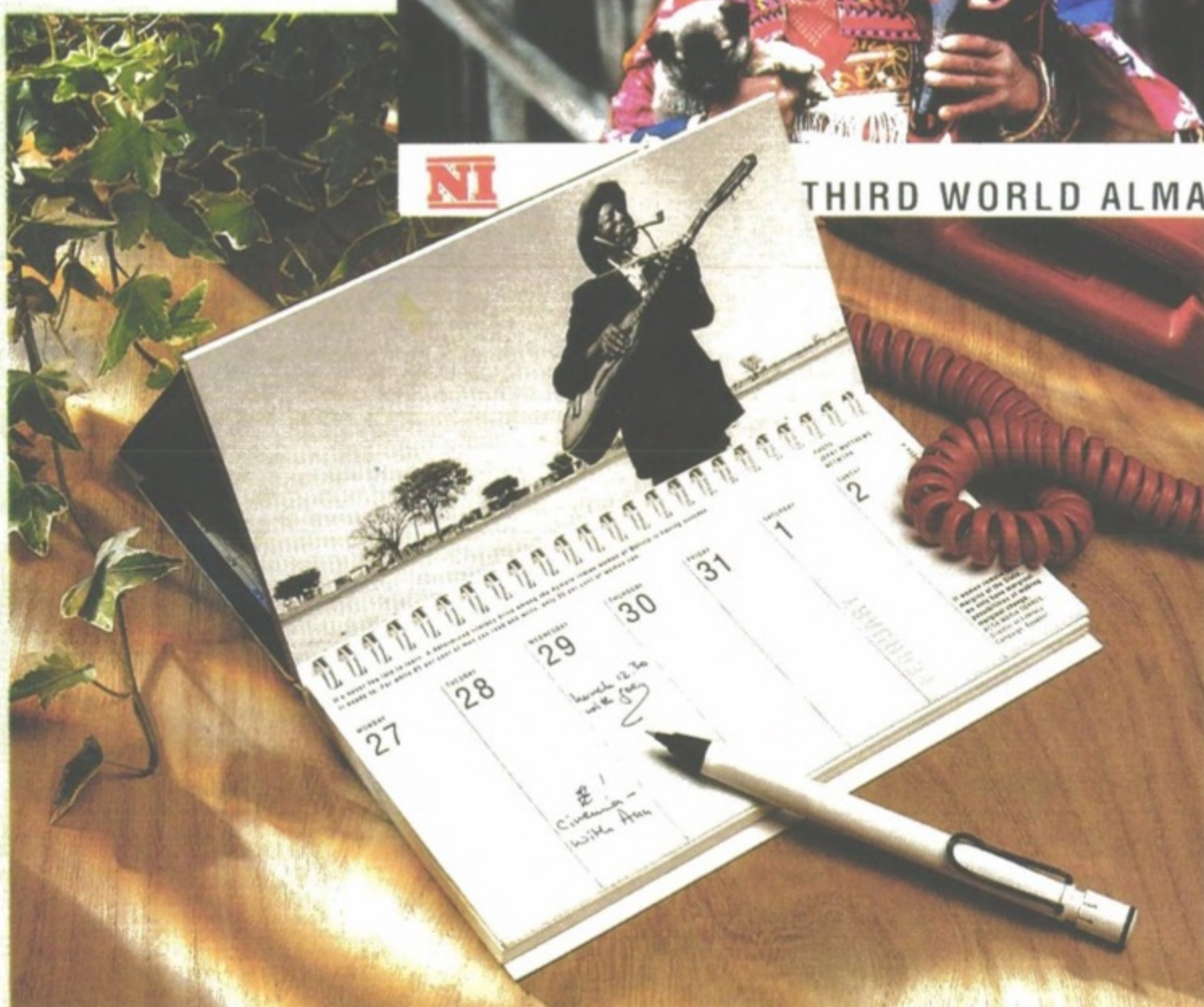
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